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HINDOO FEMALE EDUCATION.

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CENTRAL SCHOOL.

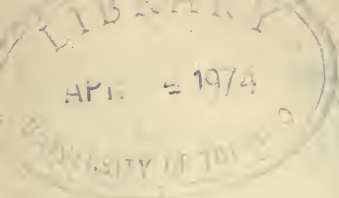
HINDOO FEMALE EDUCATION

BY



PRISCILLA CHAPMAN.

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PREFACE.

It was an appeal to the ladies of Liverpool in 1821, from the Rev. H. Ward, Baptist Missionary, which first excited attention to the degraded and neglected state of the females of India. The most limited insight into the state of the Hindoo Female population, brings to view so much misery and wretchedness, that it is impossible for the Christian mind not to feel impatient that the moral condition of the many millions of females existing in our dominions in the east, should be well understood, that they may promptly receive their share of sympathy from those possessing the means of ministering to their necessities. It will be shown that the difficulties in the way of benefiting the Hindoo female are great; but in exact proportion to their very formidable character, exertion and assistance become the more urgent.

The attempts which have been making for the last seventeen years, to introduce Christianity and education among the Native Females of Hindos-

tan are here described ;—though progress in the work has been slow, and success very limited, it will be evident that real good has been done, and that the way is now opened and prepared for more extended efforts.

Had it fallen to the lot of any European to penetrate the abyss of female degradation, the best of feelings would forbid the recital ; it is rather to the obvious consequences of the neglect they suffer, and to their unhappy exclusion from all the precious gifts of God which we enjoy, that attention is directed :—whilst the manners, customs, and superstitions of the people are noticed, as explaining the sources of existing evils.

The Society for Promoting Native Female Education in China and the East, has already prominently brought this subject to the consideration of the Christian public, and affords valuable assistance to the cause.

The efforts of European females are alluded to with a humiliating consciousness of how few there are, who can speak upon the subject ; we feel thankful, however, that an example of singular devotion, to the promotion of this cause especially, is before us—Mrs. Wilson, who was first led to embark for India, by Mr. Ward's appeal. After seventeen years unceasing labor, she continues to find the Lord's blessing resting upon, and extend-

ing her benevolent designs. It is the result of Mrs. Wilson's endeavours in the two institutions in Calcutta, designated the Native Female Orphan Refuge and the Central School, which this sketch principally embraces.

Such Institutions or Schools as the Author is acquainted with, are mentioned; but in the absence of correct information from the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay, in both of which, schools for native females have been formed, our notices are confined to the state of the work in Bengal.

The profits that may ensue from this little work, will be devoted to the benefit of the Female Orphan Refuge, and the Central School.

** * * Communications in furtherance of Hindoo Female Education to be addressed to P. C. at the Publishers'.*

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CHAPTER I.

EFFECT OF CLIMATE—FAMINES—BUILDINGS OF THE OPULENT—
APARTMENTS FOR FEMALES—HUTS OF THE POOR AND THEIR
CARELESS HABITS—PREJUDICIAL EFFECTS ON CONSTITUTION, &c.
—EMIGRATION OF THE COOLY POPULATION—DIVERSITY OF
LANGUAGE—NECESSITY OF THE VERNACULAR TONGUE FOR
MISSIONARY OBJECTS—INFLUENCE OF THE MUSSULMAN POPU-
LATION UPON THE HINDOOS.

A CERTAIN degree of acquaintance with the peculiar effects of climate, upon the physical powers and habits must precede an association with the people whom we desire to benefit. The Hindoos are admitted to possess the ready ability, which under an enlightened Christian system, would qualify them to keep pace with the most intelligent nation, but the exhausting character of the climate, under which Europeans are not known to be reared to the third generation, too frequently entails upon them at an early age, lassitude and debility, virtually disqualifying them for energetic application. Under the burning sun and long-protracted drought of India, the tendency to degenerate may be said to pervade the entire animal

and vegetable kingdom ; indeed famine, that fearful scourge, with but a few years of intermission, is found to visit in turn every part of this vast continent, leaving traces of weakness and infirmity, which even the unborn children are heirs to. Too generally indeed does imbecility of mind follow the prostration of bodily strength. The temperate habits of the people, are happily a great corrective of these evils.

Enquiry into the national customs as exhibited in the construction as well as in the interior of their dwellings, exposes much which conduces to the debility of the Hindoo constitution; the buildings of the opulent are occasionally of magnificent exterior, covering a large quadrangle; but frequently there is some important part left to be completed, or even suffered to remain in a state of ruin. The preservation of health by drainage, or ventilation, has never been the subject of consideration: the well or tank which supplies water for the household, is the resort of numbers for bathing and washing their clothes; indeed the court of the house is the receptacle of the worst filth and rubbish; cleanliness is as little the ornament of the interior as of the outer offices, and it is little to be wondered at, since the dwellings of such descendants of the family, as claim patriarchal protection, are all under the same

roof, connected by galleries which encircle each story, whilst an unlimited number of dependents attaching themselves to the establishment, lie about in every direction asleep at all hours: there is a succession of small chambers, often extremely narrow, with a very low ceiling; this construction is intended to exclude the sun's rays: but by excluding the air also, becomes unhealthy. The apartments for the women, denominated "the Zenanah," are studiously secluded; the gratings or shutters with small air holes, serving not simply as a protection from the heat, but rather as prison security, through which none can penetrate, to search into the sad scenes of misery resulting from the perversion of heaven's greatest blessing.

In cities, the huts of the poor are crowded together on small patches of land, which form a bazaar, bearing a high rental; they are frequently under the windows of a palace. In the country they seek the shade of topes or close jungles, at some little distance from the road or pathway; several small mat or mud dwellings, for perhaps not less than three generations of the same stock, are enclosed, so as to afford protection for their women and substance; the number of inmates in the small space of twelve or fourteen feet square, being often a matter of astonishment.

They dig holes and pits indiscriminately for soil to raise the floor or walls, and allow them to remain open for the convenience of collecting water; being close to the dwellings, they are but too often filled with the refuse of the neighbourhood: in many districts the huts are surrounded by small plots or gardens, in which a few plantains cover the neglected appearance of the enclosure.

There is something agreeable in the degree of ease which the unstudied distribution of a village presents; the leaves of the palm or cocoanut overtopping such secluded resorts of the Indian population, form an excellent thatch: and it requires no skill to train the gourd or its species, over the whole enclosure or dwelling-place, so as to form "a garden of cucumbers;" at times, when the attractions of nature withdraw our attention from the painful circumstances, under which we know the people to be living, the imagination may be easily led into pleasing dreams of their happiness.

In lower Bengal, where during many months the most humid climate prevails, the natives spread a thin grass mat or leaves on the damp ground for a bed; and in the large cities, during the hot season, the greater proportion of the poor, Mussulmans as well as Hindoos, quit their dwellings, and entirely covering themselves with a linen

cloth, as a protection against the numerous insects; lie down in rows on the road side for their night's sleep. During the cold weather they are but ill provided with additional clothing; and in many parts those who, under the strongest influence of the sun, go with their heads uncovered, and their bodies almost bare, crowd round the fire which they can contrive to heap together, seeking in vain for adequate shelter; thus we find them constantly suffering from fever, the spleen, and cholera, and complaints attributable to exposure and malaria. An additional cause of the Hindoos being for the most part a feeble race, is the want of strengthening food, being limited to fish, rice, and succulent vegetables, varied with unwholesome sweetmeats and fruit; and at any distance from the rivers, they are obliged too frequently to drink water from small tanks or mere puddles, in a very filthy state.

In these sketches, we have prominently in view the people who are now our fellow subjects, and with whom on the leading rivers, (to the banks of which numbers resort as a favourite place of settlement,) the traveller comes most frequently into contact. The Rajpoots and tribes of the hill country possess many advantages: with greater physical strength, their habits are less shackled by superstition, and sharing the superior

6 EMIGRATION OF THE COOLY POPULATION.

attractions which their scenery and climate afford, their history gives ample scope both in romance and anecdote, of which intelligent writers have largely availed themselves. We cannot however but make special allusion to the Cooly population of the ridge of hills in Lower Bengal, who are supposed to have been less exposed to foreign encroachment, and are almost entirely free from Brahminical influence; presenting in fact an example of the Hindoo of ancient days, in a very neglected and ignorant state. Of these people, many thousands have recently shown their indifference to caste and other bonds of superstition, by consenting to engage as labourers in settlements across the seas, an effort for independence, which however humble the source, may be made the means of more rapidly introducing freedom of action and civilization among the people; it is matter of regret that, although urged to do so, they have in very few instances consented to take their wives with them; such tribes as these, possess no resources, and are utterly despised by the sacred caste, as unworthy of their notice; abuses in the enlistment and transport of these people, have however induced the government to prohibit further emigration for the present.

Diversity of language exists, much in the same comparative degree throughout the continent of

India, as amongst the different nations of Europe : The Moors continued the exclusive use of Persian in their studies, and in the administration of Government, to which practice until lately, the British authorities have adhered, using Hindoostanee, or the Camp language, for conversational purposes ; like the French language in Europe, the Hindoostanee is now generally understood in all parts of India, not however sufficiently so to obviate the necessity of acquiring the vernacular tongue, wherever the benefit of the people is contemplated. Bengali is spoken from the Bay of Bengal in the south, to the mountains of Bootan in the north, and from the borders of Ramgur to Arakan. The Brahmins always anxious to establish their superiority, and indeed conceiving themselves to be a peculiar race of beings, have studiously distinguished themselves by retaining the Sanscrit ; in which language only, any books of history or real interest exist : they are careful to infuse this dialect as much as possible into the Bengali and Hindoostanee, so as frequently to be unintelligible to their inferiors. The importance of making the Vernacular language the medium of transacting the affairs of each district, is now a principle acknowledged by our authorities ; and in the qualification of native officers, the attainment of English, on a superficial knowledge of which they

too frequently pride themselves, will not be permitted to be of further influence, than as it may tend to general knowledge, and the improvement of morals. The women totally uninstructed, and treated as unworthy of being admitted to any community of interests, have amongst the Hindoos a dialect peculiar to themselves, to which in their intercourse with them, the men purposely confine themselves. With the lower orders in Bengal, the knowledge of language is restricted to comparatively few words, and this adds much to the difficulty of conveying instruction. The peculiar characters in which the languages of the East are written, demand the special attention of the student; the simplicity of construction however, tends much to facilitate its acquirement, and there are many instances of Europeans attaining, within a very short period, a sufficient knowledge of the vernacular tongue to enable them to preach intelligibly to the people.

Intermingled as the Musselman race now is, with the Hindoo, under our Christian rule, it is impossible wholly to omit the consideration of Mahomedan influence; an unbending martial temper, towards those whom they have conquered, allows of no common accord; and in their daily habits, the law of the land is frequently violated with impunity. Mahomedanism, as a sect,

founded on corrupt Christianity mixed with Judaism, in its principles, wars against idolatry; but as the Mahomedan festivals are conducted in many parts of India, they appear to assimilate with the practices of the Hindoos. It is however, a very interesting fact, that the Mussulman's un-deviating diligence in prayer is preserved, unrestrained by place or occupation: this close adherence to the usage of our patriarchs and prophets, virtually puts those who possess the truth, and do not manifest its power, to an open shame; nevertheless Mahomedans may be considered the most obdurate opponents of our missionaries, and it is grievous to dwell on the effects of morals, countenanced by their faith with reference to the female sex, a numerous body, who are as much sunk in degradation, as the apparently more wretched people, whose condition now claims our prominent consideration.

CHAPTER II.

RELATION OF FEMALES TO THE OTHER SEX—DESIRE FOR MALE
ISSUE—INFANTICIDE—HUMAN SACRIFICES—RESCUE OF VIC-
TIMS—SALE OF CHILDREN AND MENIAL SLAVERY—PARENTAL
AFFECTION—CEREMONIES AT THE BIRTH OF AN INFANT, &c.—
DOCILE CHARACTER OF THE ANIMALS—DIVERSITY OF COLOUR
—FORM AND FEATURES—ORNAMENTS—DRESS—DIFFICULTY OF
ACCESS TO THE DWELLINGS OF THE POOR.

THE relation in which the females of India actually stand to the other sex, may be traced in great measure to the sufferings and barbarities imposed upon the Hindoos by their Mahomedan conquerors, when to secure them from the utmost degradation, they were compelled to immure them in places of the greatest seclusion ; indeed the Hindoos confess that it was not so in more ancient times, but the exercise of power and lust, has so effectually rivited the chain, that it is readily conceded now to be the irrefragable custom of the nation, the slightest breach of which, threatens the individual with as much dishonour, as attached originally to those, whose barbarity first rendered it necessary to resort to this lamentable means of protecting

the helpless. It is remarkable that at the present day, these habits, so grievous in their consequences should be shared with comparatively little distinction by Hindoos as well as Mahomedans. The desire for male issue so universally prevalent throughout the East, is one of the strongest characteristics of the Hindoos, a passion supported by the cruel system of their idolatry, which led to female infanticide without restraint, prior to the establishment of British rule. Having happily put an end to the horrible practice in our territories, the authorities are exerting their influence with the native powers for its total suppression: but the melancholy fact is well authenticated, that at the present time there are many thousands of female infants annually so destroyed in the native states. There are not wanting amongst our countrymen those who speak lightly of the operation of the Hindoo system; its depth of iniquity may not be discovered by the superficial observer, but a recent fearful exposure of human sacrifices, in a part of the country belonging to the English, produced the acknowledgment, that with the horrors of this superstition, and its demoralizing influence, even the most vigilant are only partially acquainted. While Hindooism takes credit for peculiar mildness, and an extreme sensibility in reference to the destruction of life, it has given birth to rites and practices which

impart a fiendish malignity to the human character. The civil magistrate has lately rescued, in the district bordering on the Goomsur territory, a number of victims of both sexes held in bondage till the fit time of sacrifice; four little girls thus delivered, are safely lodged in Mrs. Wilson's Orphan Refuge. It is the purport of this inhuman rite to propitiate Ceres. The victim when tied to a stake is destroyed by a simultaneous effort of the multitude to obtain a small piece of the flesh, cut with a knife from the body, to be deposited in their fields before sun-set. In so degraded an estimation is the female infant held, that even in Calcutta, a pressure of poverty not unfrequently induces the parents to offer them for sale, prizing them at the smallest consideration. However vigilant our laws, it must be admitted that numbers are thus subjected to slavery for lust and menial purposes. Seizures of children of a riper age, in the act of being conveyed to their new proprietors, have not been of unusual occurrence with the Calcutta police; very recently, twenty girls in one boat on the Hoogly, destined for incarceration in a Musselman's house, have been thus happily placed at liberty.

Dark as is this picture of the state of society, we are often rejoiced by a demonstration of genuine parental affection, which is so much at

variance with the evils actually existing, that the heart is warmed to the work of convincing them of truth. There are many pleasing scenes in India, of the poor delighting in their children, and where issue fails, however small their substance, the Hindoos are found frequently to adopt the offspring of others; mothers, like the Jewish maidens of old, carrying their large waterpots on the head, are seldom seen without the child 'dandled on the hip.' Children are generally suckled till three years old, and such as can walk even, are constantly straddled across the left hip of the parent, when going to labour; they wear no clothing, and will gamble on the ground for hours, without requiring attention.

Amongst the Brahmins, and all such as can afford to entertain or reward them, there are many ceremonies to be observed prior to, and after the birth of the infant; and in the process of purification, there is much which appears to be borrowed from the Jews. The days on which the ears and nose are pierced for ornaments, or when the name is given, or when the infant first tastes of rice, are considered great festivals.

In the villages of the Hindoos, the traveller is struck by the pleasing familiarity of children with the animals which herd round the dwellings. The dog being in a wild degenerate state, is distin-

guished from such as are of good race, by the title of 'Pariah,' and the numbers which attach themselves to a village, sharing the offal with the Jackall, excite apprehension, for the effects of the great heat; but hydrophobia is not common; they beset the palanquin and strangers with loud yells; with the children however they become extraordinarily docile; indeed the Jackall prowls through the narrow pathways, without exciting any movement amongst the little urchins, who are generally lying on the road-side, or playing with their goats. Few things are prettier than the frolics of one and the other, and there is many a touching scene when the knife is laid upon the favourite kid as a sacrificial offering. It is close to the hut door that the trough or rack stands, from which the small oxen receive their pittance of rice, straw, &c.: with the natives these creatures are the very emblems of docility, but at the sight of an European, they display an unaccountable alarm, and breaking from their stake, run for a great distance. A native horse shews the same fear, so that an English groom can with difficulty approach him. No sooner is anything thrown from the dwelling, than crows and kites are at hand to carry it off; with these most serviceable birds, the children become so well associated, that at their meals they are often beset, and have difficulty in keeping the food in their own hands.

Children are no doubt occasionally carried off by the wild animals, but neither for the vulture or the large monkey which abound most, do they appear to show any apprehension.

There is a considerable diversity of colour apparent even in infants ; some castes much exposed to labour in the sun, are perfectly black ; but the nut-brown colour, spoken of by Heber as agreeable, predominates ; a light skin is considered both by Hindoos and Mussulmans, as evidence of high caste. Their limbs are delicately formed, affording the most exquisite models of symmetry, and being usually without any clothing, or not more than decency absolutely demands, they acquire an ease and pliability of movement, which is unknown in Europe.

The Hindoo female is slender and of low stature ; indeed, the national sense of beauty greatly consists in diminutive features, so that a woman exceeding five feet in height, is objected to as unsightly ; and even amongst the converts to Christianity, a tall female is seldom asked in marriage.

Their hair is of that fine texture not generally met with amongst Asiatics, and excepting in cases of disease, it is invariably jet black. It engages much of the woman's time ; even at three years of age it is oiled and braided, combed back from the

forehead, it is turned up in one large knot of plait, and frequently a wreath of small flowers is twisted tastefully round the knot; the line of division from the forehead, is often painted a bright red. When the parents are under any vow on their own behalf or that of the child, inducing a special propitiation, the hair so prized by the Hindoo female is offered to one of their deities; under such circumstances it is very usual to see girls from two years old and upwards, grossly disfigured by their hair being matted together with layers of mud, to remain in this state during the period of the vow. It never recovers its original character until the head is shaved, which the females esteem a great disgrace.

They have naturally very good teeth, but the early and immoderate use of pawn or betel, with the sweetmeats taken in profusion, soon destroys the enamel. Their hands and feet are strikingly small; it is the custom to make an effort to keep them covered, which gives an additional appearance of modesty, when in the presence of their superiors: the nails are stained with betel nut, and occasionally the palms of the hand, and the sides of the feet, are painted with a bright red colour; this however is a custom more particularly observable amongst women of degraded virtue. The dark eye is supposed to be rendered more

imposing by the eyelids and brows being stained with a black dye, a process to which infants are subjected a few days after birth. Small marks, in the same style as the tattoo, made in the centre of the forehead, and on the arms, are esteemed very becoming, and amongst the lower orders they are made indicative of their caste ; the process of inserting the vegetable dye with a needle, is very painful and frequently produces illness.

There is no feature in the countenance displeasing, though we should observe that they seldom attain to beauty, or the expression which excites admiration. The weight of ornaments with which an infant is burdened, is astonishing ; unimportant as this subject may appear to be, it claims attention as one of the leading propensities with all classes of Hindoos. We are reminded continually of the description of the Jewish women given by Isaiah, the multitude of ornaments enumerated by the prophet, falls short however of the number which the Hindoos contrive to crowd upon their persons. Neck, forehead, nose, ears, arms, wrists, fingers, toes, ancles, each have their appropriate ring, bracelet, or necklace ; the number of each description being only limited to the wealth or fancy of the wearer. Amongst the higher castes, these ornaments are of immense

¹ Chap. iii. 18.

value; the poor imitate them in brass, iron, tin, lead, porcelain, in fact, almost any substance of trifling value that can be found to answer the purpose. It is a common custom amongst those who possess a little money, to convert it into ornaments for their wives, that being the safest way of retaining their property; and in case of want, they are easily put into pawn, or exchanged for ready cash. Their nose rings are large, and to an English eye, very disfiguring and uncomfortable appendages to the face; but the Hindoo women pride themselves on them, more than on any other of their jewels; to the toe rings small bells are added, that they may make a 'tinkling with their feet.' Simple as is the character of the dress, which the climate prescribes for them, the arrangement is not less a matter of study, than with those nations who are obliged to wear more clothing. It consists of one piece of cloth, generally of their homespun cotton, in Bengali styled a saree, occasionally of silk, and amongst the Brahmins, and the higher castes, of the finest and most transparent muslin; a highly-coloured border according to taste, relieves the white surface, and on festival or poojah days, many are worn of pink and other colours; widows are required to wear their dress perfectly plain. The sarees are woven appropriate lengths for women and children; for the latter, being about two

yards and a half long, and three quarters broad. The width passing once round the person, it is carried over the shoulders and head, and the adjustment of this covering, so as to give an effect of modest address, is the constant employment of the hand and arm; with three of these garments the poor consider themselves sufficiently well furnished. The Musulmen women dress with a full petticoat of calico, or other such material, as taste suggests, throwing a muslin scarf of about two yards and a half long, and one yard and a half wide round the shoulders and over the head, under which is a small muslin jacket fixed tight to the body; they wear worked slippers, embroidered with gold or silver lace and spangles, the toes fantastically turned back upon the instep.

The timid and retiring address of the Hindoo girl is very winning, and nature has certainly been bountiful to them, but a little observation upon their habits and intercourse with their playmates, discovers unusually strong dispositions to vanity, inquisitiveness, jealousy, and consequent quarrelsomeness, terminating frequently in fearful anger; Ignorant of the blessed spirit of forgiveness, these quarrels are resumed after any temporary separation with continuous acrimony, and last for weeks. The entire neglect of their mental powers, leaves them without occupation or rational recreation;

girls of seven or eight years of age, already given in marriage, in the absence of any better diversion, will sit for hours playing at pitch-and-toss, with small stones or pieces of brick; when asked what they are about, the common answer is, 'we are sitting.'

On first approach, the Hindoos give the impression of being very inaccessible, indeed the manners of female children almost invariably betray a certain degree of fear, when spoken to, they hang down the head, and cover the face with their saree; a very little kindness, however, soon makes them familiar. Those who attend the school at Calcutta, welcome their teachers with loud shouts of salaam, and will often run by the side of the carriage to their houses, showing the greatest eagerness for admission, and noticing any novelties with delight; passing through any of their villages, the ladies with whom the children are in habits of intercourse, always meet with the most cordial recognition from them. It is however very different with the natives, who have had no communication with Europeans. A lady thus describes an interview which she had with a poor family in the neighbourhood of Calcutta. 'In our walk we stopped at a small hut, where we heard the voice of children, and were invited by a civil man to approach; discovering it to be a native boy's school, we entered and made our salaam.

About seven or eight women were peeping out from the other side of the small mat enclosure; too glad to perceive female countenances, we moved towards them, but the little girls ran away screaming, whilst the mothers looked really terrified. One, with a sick child, we began to talk to, inquiring what was the matter with the baby? till at last trembling from head to foot, she said, 'Pray go away, I'm getting too frightened.' Another asked 'whether we were not holy spirits?' Such is the experience of all Europeans, when approaching a Hindoo village, the women covering their heads, run away to hide themselves, though after a little while, the men and children will follow the visitor in crowds.

CHAPTER III.

EFFECT OF IDOLATRY UPON THE MENTAL POWERS—LOWER CASTE WOMEN ONLY VISIBLE—MARRIAGE CEREMONIES, &c. —INSTRUCTION OF THE NEWLY MARRIED—HABITS—NEGLECT OF ARTS AND SCIENCES—CONVERSATION—VISIT TO A FAMILY OF HIGH CASTE—DIFFICULTIES OF ACCESS AND INSTRUCTION NOT INSUPERABLE.

THE Hindoo female character can in no way fall under the suspicion of deficiency of power, so long as freedom of mind and body is enjoyed. But if we follow them through the mazes of seclusion, and the bigotry of idol worship, to which at a tender age they are so unhappily devoted, we find the uncultivated human heart in its utmost depravity, and from the absence of wholesome occupation, all the faculties in a state of great weakness, sinking into folly, only seen in undisciplined wayward children. It is an observation applicable to the whole continent of India, that only the lower castes of Hindoo women are visible. Natives of respectability never converse with Europeans either on matters affecting the welfare of their





women, or their domestic habits, unless influenced by very peculiar circumstances: The inquirer meets with the reply that, 'it is not our custom to speak of our women,' too generally it is added, 'they are incapable of exercising any degree of mental capacity,' for the men are accustomed to treat them as merely created for their enjoyment or for their service, and really do not esteem them to be of the same order of beings; thus most effectually preventing their own civilization. Nevertheless we find that the Hindoo parent invariably considers the espousal of his daughters of the greatest importance, making it a means of establishing an alliance with a family of his own caste, from which some favour or advancement can be expected, or actually bargaining for a consideration. L'Abbé Dubois says, 'To marry, or to buy a wife, are synonymous terms in this country, almost every parent makes his daughter an article of traffic, obstinately refusing to give her up to her lawful husband, until he has rigorously paid down the sum of money which he was bound for, according to the custom of the caste. This practice of purchasing the young women whom they are to marry, is an inexhaustible source of disputes and litigation, particularly amongst the poorer people.' The marriage ceremonies, which are in courtesy, as well as religiously observed, are the great occa-

sions for all classes of Hindoos to indulge their natural vanity by the display of their wealth and finery, and when the low consideration for the female character is remembered, it is not possible to account for the enormous sums of money thus lavished, otherwise than as the grand means of self-exaltation; the poor too frequently borrow large sums for these celebrations, which, at the customary high rate of interest, entails upon them insurmountable embarrassment. We were lately highly amused by watching the proceedings of a poor sweeper on the marriage of his son: a caste so low, that Brahmins attach a sense of defilement to their presence. The man was in the receipt of five rupees, and his wife four rupees a month, but still he was not content to entertain less than two hundred guests at the evening feast; seated in a large circle near the house, they were regaled with curries, each guest brought his vessel, and receiving his portion from the hands of the host took it to his own home: the gaieties enlivened by musicians lasted three days. The great season for marriages is from February to May: Of the weighty import of this ceremony however, those who are immediately affected by it through life, are totally unconscious; for it is at the time of betrothment when mere children, that the legal tie, which is not more easily dissoluble than in many

other countries, is formed ; there is much in the celebration reminding us of the marriage ceremony mentioned in the parable of the virgins : At sun-set, the procession is arranged with a profusion of lights ; and, accompanied with music, the bridegroom parades the district, proceeding towards midnight to the house of the bride, where she joins him in a closed palanquin with her attendants. The display continues for several successive days, when the betrothed parties separate, the bride returning to her own parents to be subjected to the restraints of the zenannah, and she remains with them till of an age to be claimed by her husband, with whom, meantime, she has had no acquaintance. At the age of eleven or twelve she is made over to her espoused, when similar ceremonies are repeated, for several nights together. Open house is kept by the nearest akin, where numbers of Brahmins are entertained. Of the detail of their idol usages, it is not our purpose to speak. The festival closes with what is called a nautch, a combination of distraction and idolatry, to which it has been customary to invite Europeans ; but latterly the distinction between consistent Christian profession, and that liberty of conscience which countenances lascivious dances and base superstitions, has been more generally observed, and attendance of Europeans is now happily

of rare occurrence. The young married woman is given in charge to her mother-in-law, professedly for the purpose of being taught her duties as a wife, but in fact she becomes little better than her menial slave ; from this time she is more strictly confined, almost entirely deprived of any acquaintance with nature, and being debarred from any resource for the improvement of her faculties, she forms one of a numerous society of females whose amusements are frivolous in the extreme, and whose morals are permitted to sink into the greatest state of degradation.

Hitherto the instruction the bride has received in Hindoo worship, has been limited to a prayer, prompted by the mother, for her happy espousals, but she is now called upon to take her part in the religious household ceremonies ; the daily arranging of broken flowers as an offering before the idol, accompanied with the outpouring of water, and the constant repetition of the names of their gods, appears to be the sum and substance of what they term worship : in this they are instructed by Brahminees, or women devoted to serve in the idol temples ; but very generally a Brahmin forms part of the establishment for this purpose. It is now also, that she hears read such parts of the muntas as are intended for the women, the character of which is to enjoin the most servile

obedience. We quote the following as an example ; ‘ Let all her words, her actions, and her deportment, give open assurance that she views her husband as her god : then shall she be honoured of all men, and be praised as a discreet and virtuous wife.’ The woman’s domestic occupations consist almost entirely, in learning how to prepare the different curries and sweetmeats relished by the Hindoos. The only two stated times for eating, are after ablutions in the morning, and after sunset. It is customary for the women, having waited upon their husbands, to partake of the remaining food in a separate apartment. None but the nautch girls, devoted to the worst service of idol worship, ever learn to read ; this is cited by the higher orders, as a reason why women should feel ashamed of being instructed : but the fact that they were not excluded in former days from the same cultivation of their understandings as the men, is well authenticated, and mention is made in their shastras, of individual females who distinguished themselves, not merely by the knowledge of sanscrit, a matter of great praise, but even as composers and translators of books, for which their memory is deservedly held in high esteem. With music they are totally unacquainted, as well as with the knowledge of any art or science ; indeed in a country so long oppressed by the worst military

despotism, the fine arts cannot be looked for in any degree of perfection, even amongst the highest orders of men. Women do no needlework, but are sometimes occupied with cutting flowers and making filagree work ; life however passes without any employment bearing the stamp of industry ; they will sit for hours in circles wiling away the time in silly obscene conversation, to which none but an experienced Christian female can safely hazard exposure. Ladies who have been received by the Ranees and Begums of native courts, are full of lamentation at the childish folly and the absence of modesty, which characterises their intercourse ; and it is painful to say that nothing has been found to act so unfavourably upon the native princes, wards of the British government, as the influence of their female relatives, from which they could not with any respect for natural affection, be excluded.

A visit to the family of a Baboo of high caste, much associated with Europeans, is thus described ; — ‘ A message was sent by the Bebees to say, that they would put on all their jewels and richest attire, hoping that the English ladies would do the same ; the hour fixed for the visit, which had been the subject of much arrangement, was five in the afternoon ; the gateway by which we entered to a very large house was narrow and shabby,

leading into a spacious quadrangle, the centre of which was occupied by an open stage, raised upon pillars, for a place of exhibition on days of worship or amusement: from the galleries which encircled the house both above and below, many doors were seen leading to the different apartments of the numerous inmates; next to those appropriated to the females, was a small room furnished partly in the English style, into which we were shown. We had to wait some time before any one appeared, at last children without any clothing, though some were seven or eight years old, came in, but ran away as soon as we attempted to speak, or to touch them. A little girl however soon returned, accompanied by one of the Bebees, others at different distances followed; we were astonished at the degree of timidity betrayed by extreme awkwardness, some approaching with fingers in their mouths, some leaning against the wall or furniture, and others rudely thrusting forward to satiate their curiosity, none venturing to speak or even to offer a salaam. The legitimate wife, or head Bebee, was soon distinguished, a beautiful woman, as fair as many Europeans, and of the sweetest expression of countenance, graceful in form and manner; addressing ourselves to her, we discovered that the group of women and children, (about thirty women and as many chil-

dren,) that surrounded us, were relations of her husband either by blood or marriage, and occupied one side of the building, the other being allotted to the men. The elder women would not venture to come near us, bidding us to keep at a distance, saying that they feared we should destroy their caste; the younger soon threw off their restraint, and began to pull our dresses about, closely examining all that we had on; they asked so many questions about our clothes, our habits, our manner of eating, especially of our marriages and the degree of intercourse that European ladies were allowed to have with their husbands, that we were at a loss to reply, and had the greatest difficulty to suppress the noise occasioned by their all speaking at once, and in the loudest possible tone of voice. We were pained beyond expression with the frivolousness and impurity of their minds and conversation: their better feelings being roused, the Bebees one and all confessed that they had never been taught otherwise; 'but that they were willing to learn to read, or work like the English ladies: for as they had nothing to do all day long, it was their custom to be idle, and to talk about foolish things.' On taking leave of them, they begged that we would come again, and bring them books, pictures, and dolls. In this interview and afterwards, when they received notice that strangers

would accompany us, they were dressed in sarees of the most transparent muslin or gauze, with gold and silver flowers, completely exposing the person, and were loaded with a profusion of ornaments of gold, silver, pearls, and diamonds; but when we unexpectedly called upon them, they were in the opposite degree neglected, the children running about without the slightest covering, so that the approach was any thing but pleasant. The Bebees' apartments, which we afterwards visited, were dark and uncomfortable, in a state of great filthiness, with narrow gratings for windows; they took pleasure in shewing us their jewellery, which was kept in the same state of untidiness; and speaking of their husbands, they seemed to appreciate them only by the number and value of these gifts.'

From the little unrestrained intercourse which has been obtained with the higher class of females, it is apparent that they have that degree of docility and quickness of apprehension, which would make instruction easy; the strong influence of '*custom*,' and the bad effects of long existing habits of indolence, create difficulties of no small magnitude, but they are not insuperable; and though the men too frequently add, that 'the females are so stupid that they cannot, and so foolish that they will not learn,' we are convinced that the greatest impediments do not rest with them.

CHAPTER IV.

POLYGAMY—PLURALITY OF WIVES—EVIL EFFECTS OF THE SYSTEM—RIGHT OF ADOPTION—CONSEQUENT LITIGATION—PROFLIGACY OF NATIVE BRAHMINS—WIDOWHOOD—SUTTEE—CONJUGAL AFFECTION—RELATIONS OF THE MARRIED POOR—NEGLECT IN OLD AGE—MARRIAGE TIE NOT BINDING TO LIVE TOGETHER.

POLYGAMY is not acknowledged amongst the Hindoos: the wife first espoused by the rites and ceremonies to which we have alluded, always continues the head of the house, and her right of inheritance, together with that of her male issue, is secured by the ancient laws of the people; a plurality of wives is however customary, and under certain pretexts, of which the absence of an heir by the legitimate wife, is the chief, it is not considered otherwise than correct: such after-marriages are not conducted with nearly the same observances as the first, and there are many men, who seeing the evil consequences, are careful to avoid such connexions. All the females of the same family, living together under one roof, after

the patriarchal system, without the constraining spirit of grace which characterized that dispensation, is attended with the greatest evil; and where women in a state of concubinage are added to the household, discord and vice proverbially reign.

There is a right of adoption vested in the husband, which by authorizing an alien to perform his funeral rites, gives priority of inheritance, and becomes the fertile source of litigation; where however so many women and children live in the same apartments, pretexts are never wanting for legal questions, which too frequently the natives will contrive to protract for generations, until the estate is consumed, or the usurious money-lender is weary. A Hindoo considering himself disgraced by his daughters remaining unespoused, the heir is specially charged to see that they are given in marriage, but otherwise there is no legal provision for them. An illicit intercourse would not merely shock the affections of a respectable parent, but be considered to cast a stain on the character of a family; yet it is notorious, that for the honour of an alliance with a Kulin Brahmin, the daughters of respectable Hindoos are given to them in marriage, when such is their profligacy, that it is questionable if they, who contract such connexions whenever it may suit their purpose, ever return to the place again. Ward had heard of

such persons having one hundred and twenty wives. But the grand source of misery in a native house, is the degradation attaching to widowhood, and the prohibition of the perhaps yet infant widow to marry again. It is not simply the violation of all the dictates of nature which gives rise to almost universal demoralization, but widows of riper age are too frequently wholly destitute of provision, and in their fall from comparative ease to the worst state of dependence, they become a ready sacrifice to the horrors of vice. We extract from the *Friend of India*, the following valuable notice on this subject.

‘ The marriage of Hindoo widows has latterly engaged much of the attention of the Hindoo community, and the repeated discussion of it in the native papers, appears to indicate the approach of some favourable change. The Bombay government are also said to have turned their minds to it, and to have enquired of those learned in Hindoo law, whether there was any peremptory prohibition of the marriage of widows to be found in the shastras. This is one of the most important questions connected with Hindoo polity, and bears directly upon the peace and morals of native society. Unhappily, however, the injunctions of the sacred books of the Hindoos are unequivocally and positively against their marriage, and the pre-

judices of the great bulk of the community strongly coincide with the Hindoo legislators. We say unhappily; for it would scarcely be possible to devise any rule which should more effectually tend to the total demoralization of society, than that which in a country of warm and uncontrolled passions condemns so large a number of females to a state of perpetual widowhood. Not to speak of widows of riper age, under twenty-five, with one, two, or three children, fancy the constant existence of more than a hundred thousand widows between the age of six and sixteen, who are considered a burden on their own families, and are yet debarred from entering anew into the married state, and becoming the centre of a new domestic circle, who are denied the ordinary enjoyments of life, and who can taste no pleasures which are not illegal; and it will be seen at a glance, that this system is utterly incompatible with the general welfare of society. It is difficult to conceive of any two injunctions more fatally injurious to a people, and more calculated to pollute the domestic circle with intrigues and licentiousness, than the early marriage of females, and the condemnation of the young widow to perpetual celibacy. There is so much superfluity of wickedness in this legislation, that the mind is led involuntarily to attribute it to some deep-laid scheme for inflicting

a lasting injury on the country, rather than to rules devised by men whose wisdom and benevolence are supposed to have entitled them to the gratitude of posterity. Until there be a radical reform in this branch of Hindoo economy, it will be in vain to look for any improvement of the general tone of morals. The slow progress of improvement, by reason, by education, and by enlarged observation, is anticipated wherever Christianity takes possession of the native mind. The native Christian, however his fellow-countrymen may rail at him, has this immense advantage over the Hindoo, that he admits and acts on the principle that women ought to be married at an age in which they may exercise their own choice, and that widows may enter anew into the domestic circle.

‘And if Christianity did nothing more than introduce these two radical changes into the country, and thus improve the social habits of the people, it would be the greatest blessing which the country has ever received.’

We see the Orthodox Hindoo still upholding the right of suttee; no less than eight of the wives of the late Rana of Oudypore, the highest family in India, have been burnt to death on his funeral pile,—an occurrence of the past year. What encouragement do we find in the successful aboli-

tion of this fearful practice in our territory, to put bounds to the tyranny of *custom*, and to search into the deeply hidden motives, speciously cloaked with the character of religion, which the legislature is pledged to hold inviolate.

It would be an impression very different from that which the natural disposition of the Hindoo female justifies, did we suppose them incapable of real conjugal affection. In spite of the early marriages, and the unfavourable atmosphere they breathe, there are doubtless instances in which it exists, not merely as a passion, but a principle: it must however be obvious to the native who has the advantage of an European education, that the developement of the affections under well-directed instruction, can alone lead to the true attachment between man and wife, which is the solace and ornament of Christian society. The relations of the poor fall more immediately under our observation; it is seldom that amongst them there is more than one wife: she is not however more the object of individual choice, than with the wealthy and better castes. The same seclusion of the females amongst the lower classes, is not of course attainable, but wherever the means exist, it is adopted, and with the most ignorant there is the same assumption of superiority: the wife must walk after her husband, and be content with the portion of food he has

left. It is the constant practice to beat the wife, who is perhaps a mere child, into obedience. With the poorest Ryot, however, there is the same redeeming quality of kindness towards his own kindred, which we find in the Hindoo of high caste: a ready exchange of good offices exists amongst the various castes towards their own people, though the exclusive nature of Hindooism, wars against anything like the universal principle of hospitality shewn by the Arabs; and in that state of society where there is no glitter of display, or mask, to screen the corruptions of idolatry, we look in vain for any moral restraints, but find unceasing jealousy and strife prevailing. The custom of the country forbidding any other course of industry than that which their fathers followed, there is no effort to improve their condition; consequently with an increase of family, hardships grow upon them; the actual cost of food or clothing for a child, is scarcely to be named, but the woman losing her attractions, has probably less support from the husband, who beguiles his time elsewhere. The declining years of an aged female are truly pitiable: she is not merely looked upon as burthensome, but too often as a harbinger of misfortune, and must very frequently leave the house which once belonged to her, to seek a sorry existence as a mendicant. We can

scarcely wonder that in the uncontrouled licentiousness of society, the freedom which low caste women and neglected widows enjoy, exposes them to open vice; nor must we be surprised that the abuse of their liberty, is often cited as an argument for upholding the system of female seclusion. The inference which naturally follows, is, that the axe must be laid to the root of the tree, and that knowledge, whereby the heart is made better, must, in dependence upon the divine blessing, be freely offered to all classes.

The marriage tie not being construed as an obligation to live together, gives rise to incalculable abuses. The wandering disposition of many castes, leads them to seek servitude at a great distance from their homes: they scarcely ever carry their wives with them, but live in a state of concubinage; nearly all the Hindoo domestic servants in Calcutta, and such as are in the employment of Europeans, are so circumstanced. The most respectable are in the habit of sending some portion of their earnings to their wives, by messengers of their own caste, who make occasional journeys to the district: of the want of good faith in these agents, there is however too often reason to complain. Occasional correspondence is also carried on through the medium of the writers in bazar, and every three or four years

they take leave of absence, to visit their 'country' as they term it, attaching the greatest importance to the benefits of native air in all cases of sickness. It is not the habit of the sepoys, who, although poor, are frequently of high caste, to bring their wives from their native villages into cantonments; nor on active service are they permitted to accompany them: the most favourable testimony however is given of the regularity with which they remit their surplus income to their families, amounting often to not less than two-thirds of their pay. For the becoming conduct we have just noticed, it is but fair to state, that in many instances it would not be conjugal affection that would lead to this regular transmission of money, but offerings to shrines and other local obligations.

Although converts to Christianity are taught to avoid early marriages, and can form no connection with the heathen, it is admitted to be a subject of the greatest difficulty even amongst them, to suppress the national prejudice, and unworthy distinctions in relation to females. It is to the power of divine grace alone we look, to teach them "to dwell with their wives according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life."

CHAPTER V.

BATHING—POPULATION—DUPES OF IDOL ABOMINATIONS—ATTENDANCE OF FEMALES AT JUGGERNAUT—UNBELIEF OF BRAHMINS—POWER OF CASTE—POOJAHS—NAUTCH GIRLS—SUNNYASIS—SUPERSTITIONS—EFFECT UPON THE SICK—GHAUT MURDERS—OCCASIONAL RESCUE—OBSEQUIES—PREJUDICES OF THE BRAHMINS—INTERCOURSE WITH CHRISTIANS A SUBJECT OF REPROACH—CONSIDERATION FOR LOSS OF CASTE.

THE general idea of the effect of large groups of natives performing their worship, by ablutions on the banks of the Ganges and other noble rivers of India, is much associated with the picturesque; and to the comfort and refreshment which bathing in a running stream affords, the mind is readily disposed to attach a sense of purity. Although the devotional exercises abound with absurdities, they are probably the least objectionable part of the Hindoo system; but on that very account the more beguiling. The women who are at large, spend much of their time in going backwards and forwards to the ghauts, and the crowds on days of great celebrations convey the notion of a much

greater number of females being in the enjoyment of liberty than might be anticipated; but the abundance of population is the most imposing feature in the East, giving its own peculiar weight to every thought in relation to the souls of men. The promiscuous assemblage of the sexes, although never the subject of observation amongst them, cannot fail of its demoralizing effects. Women of the higher ranks, only, visit the ghauts on days when bathing is expressly enjoined, and then it is always in their closed palanquins at day-break, before the multitude assembles. The ablution being completed, a small quantity of moist preparation of mud, cow-dung, and sandal wood, is placed on the forehead, the arms, or breast, by a Brahmin, who takes his seat on the spot for the purpose. Many of the women have to carry one large water-pot on the head, another under the right arm, with a child on the hip; others again walk through the streets with a gait any thing but consistent with the ordinary attempt at concealment, drying their long hair in the sun, and the wet saree affording no protection to their persons.

To what extent the females of India become the dupes of idol abominations, is the inquiry to which, in this stage of their history, we are naturally led. We have been deeply conscious of the misery, and many sad spectacles of death, from disease, starva-

tion, and fatigue which these poor feeble people on their pilgrimages present; but the journal of the Rev. W. Lacey, Baptist missionary at Cuttack, kept during the Rath festival 1838, states a fact respecting the comparative numbers of these victims which is truly appalling. 'The proportion of Bengalli females to men, was three to one: we were standing just before the car of Juggernaut, from the front of which the most obscene sentences were being delivered and appropriate gestures formed. I remarked to a respectable looking Brahmin, who heard and understood the hymns, that it appeared impossible to me that their wives, sisters, and daughters, could retain their virtue under such circumstances as these. He readily acknowledged that they could not; the number present was estimated at 200,000 people!'

Festival after festival follows, as if the enemy of souls would so distract the mind that it never should arrive at reflection; the distorted and monstrous figures of their idols, with the display of banners and music, appear to have no other object than to attract the women and children and the most ignorant of the people: as soon as these idols have been paraded, and have received their prescribed worship, they are thrown into the river, from whence the Mussulmans frequently take them for their tinsel ornaments and drapery. The

Brahmins, who are so much concerned in rigorously enforcing this awful delusion, will often admit that they themselves entertain very different views of the Supreme Being, but that the practice of Hindooism is well adapted to the ignorant, and entails great benefits upon the people. The subtilty with which the Hindoo system is enforced, is in nothing more apparent, than in the determined refusal of a child of three years old, either boy or girl, to accept even what may be considered the most tempting eatable, from one of another caste, with whom they have no intercourse, and more especially from a Christian. Even in the hottest weather these children are found proof against the temptation to satisfy their thirst from any other than the prescribed vessels. Fruits which can be peeled they are permitted to accept. Children generally bear the name of one or more of their numerous idols. Taken as infants to the ghauts for bathing, and to the celebrations on poojah days, it becomes an excitement to which the children habitually look; but beyond this association and the impressions to be derived from the conversation of their parents, they receive no instruction,—the tyrannical enforcement of custom being found sufficiently powerful, entirely to overawe the mind. At the Churruck Poojah, when the devotees swing twenty or thirty feet above the

ground, on hooks inserted in the fleshy part of the back, and pierce the tongue with a rod of iron, a spectacle the most disgusting, females always form a large proportion of the assembled crowd.

The festival, when the image of Juggernaut is bathed in milk, as celebrated at Serampore, has great attractions; the Hoogley is crowded with such a multitude of boats, full of men and women, that many are supposed to come to an untimely end. The higher orders of females are permitted occasionally to make pilgrimages to the most renowned Hindoo shrines, or to witness these festivals: they go in a closed palanquin, with guards and bearers in the confidence of the husband. It is in the inner courts of the houses that the wealthy generally have a performance of worship on the poojah days, which the women may view from their apartments, or some place of concealment.

The Nautch or dancing girls devoted to the idol worship, are invariably the most degraded of women. Children expressly consecrated to prostitution, are paraded through the streets with music, and it can no longer be matter of question as to the effect of any instruction associated with such a system. The gurus, or priest of the highest order, is supposed to live in celibacy; but the interference with social order which they give rise

to, throughout their districts, is quite proverbial. The Sunnyasi and Fakir covered daily with white ashes, are most frightful objects, and seem studiously to bid defiance to all modesty. An organised system of intercourse exists with their caste throughout the continent of India: grand assemblages on the banks of the principal rivers, being arranged for the different festivals. The children are taught to hold these fanatics in great veneration; but they are deservedly much dreaded, as capable of using any means for their base ends, and in the haughty spirit of the Brahmin, conceive that they have a right over the wives, as well as over the substance of the people. With a large club, a leather pouch, and a skin of the antelope or tiger over the shoulder, they pass from village to village, taking every advantage of the superstitions of the wretched people for their own wicked purposes.

The defilement which is attributed to death, and the superstition which forbids all reasonable efforts for the recovery of the sick, places the Hindoo sufferer in a condition that shocks the best feelings of humanity. No sooner do the symptoms bespeak the patient to be approaching his end, than he is hurried out of the dwelling, for fear he should breathe his last under the roof; if the means are not at hand of carrying him to the

banks of the river, he is placed on the road side on a mat or rough bedstead, receiving nothing beyond the dirty Ganges water, or a plaister of mud from the sacred stream, which is applied to the part of the body most affected.

The bystanders evince but little concern, reserving all utterance of feeling until death has taken place, when the real mourners, and the women who are hired to make lamentations, vie with each other in the loudest cries and expressions of grief, with gestures in the highest degree wild and frantic. The sympathy to which the Christian is prompted, excites the greatest surprise, and when a remedy is offered with a discreet firmness, it is very frequently accepted; many have by such timely aid, been rescued from a premature death. But it is at the places on the banks of the Ganges held specially sacred, that the most fearful scenes are witnessed: the sick are brought from distant parts, to have the privilege of expiring where ablution frees from the penalty of sin: many an exhausted fainting creature is taken from the shelter of his home, and with the burning sun upon him, is placed so far in the water, that the stream must wash him away, or the power of breathing is destroyed by the quantity of mud placed over the ears, nose, and even the mouth. Multitudes thus fall victims to base superstition,

and are reputed to die happy. Such glaring instances of wilful destruction have been exposed, that it is impossible to allude to Ghaut murders, without feelings of horror ; and impenetrable as are the recesses of Hindoo seclusion, the mind is naturally led to contemplate how many cases of suffering may in this manner arrive at a termination. It is not long since a missionary was made the instrument of releasing a female of rank from such a death, and he was rewarded by the liveliest expressions of gratitude. Incredible as it appears, should any one upon whom the last rites have been performed, revive, and refuse to die, as it has been intended he should, the displeasure of the idol is incurred, and he is utterly cast off: there is a small island in the Ganges to which they fly, now peopled by such unhappy individuals and their descendants.

The preparations customary at Hindoo obsequies, are few and simple : in a short time the body is consumed, the nearest akin setting fire to the pile : when the means are wanting to provide the necessary fuel, the body is thrown into the river. Formerly the Hoogley, in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, was rendered very loathsome, by the number of corpses carried backwards and forwards by the tides ; but at the suggestion of Lady William Bentinck, a proper place for burning is

enclosed, and the repulsive sight is now of rare occurrence. About a week after death, when it is believed that the spirit of the departed returns, a repast is given, varying in splendour with the ability of the survivors ; the seat usually occupied by the deceased being left vacant. The poorest Hindoo will be careful to provide his rice, betel, and other simple fare, for the spirit's entertainment. The future repose of the soul, or rather transmigration, is made very dependent upon the gifts conferred upon the Brahmins; there are also large distributions made to the poor, of which we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Notwithstanding the number of Brahmins who derive employment from Europeans is now very considerable, we can perceive no disposition to relax the prejudice which attaches defilement to intercourse with us: a young Brahmin so engaged, being asked by his employer in Calcutta, why he lived at a distance of sixteen miles from his work? unblushingly said, 'that the atmosphere of the city was too much defiled by Europeans to justify his sleeping, or taking his meals in the neighbourhood.' Those of high caste, in order to avoid the contamination of natives, with whom they have no intercourse, often dwell in villages distinct from all others. The near approach of a European to their food, even in the open air, will

frequently occasion the strict Hindoo to leave it ; and it is an unpardonable offence to touch any of their vessels. Mention has been made of the difficulties attending the first approach to the native female poor, and we must now shew how those who live immediately in their proximity, are hindered in the simplest acts of kindness. It was two days after one of the many destructive fires, which took place in Calcutta during the drought of 1837, when in the short space of a quarter of an hour, a thousand native huts were destroyed, that the poor people who had fled to a distance for safety, returned to their plots of ground, and raised a temporary shelter, by tying two or three mats together, at a sufficient height from the ground to sit or lie under. Whilst they were thus engaged, one of those violent tornadoes, so frequently experienced at the change of seasons in India, towards sunset, immediately succeeded by a deluge of rain, again rendered them houseless ; the wind carried their fragile mat-coverings far beyond their reach, whilst the rain soaked the ground, and seemed to threaten to wash them away, as they huddled together under the walls, to try if it were possible to gain anything like shelter. An European family seeing their distress, sent out their bearers for all the women and children ; it is thus they notice the result. ‘ Such was the hurricane,

that the men succeeded with the greatest difficulty in bringing the sufferers in: about twelve women with their little ones, and one with an infant born only a few minutes before the fire broke out, were welcomed: it was really amusing 'to see them one after the other, with the wet pouring off them, making their salaams, and looking in no way discomposed: ordering some cloths and blankets, with mats for their beds, and a good quantity of jolpan or parched rice, which our heathen people furnished, they speedily forgot their troubles, and went to sleep. Though these poor people were all notorious in Bazar for fighting and screaming, and had children of from four months to four years old with them, we were not disturbed by a sound; they appeared neither to move or speak from the time they entered the house, until they left it, unknown to us, at day break. A similar storm arose the following evening; and yet it was with difficulty that the woman with the new-born infant, and several small children, could be persuaded to come back and take shelter,—the poor creatures being reproached, as we afterwards heard, for coming under the roof of a Christian.' These difficulties will be understood to be comparatively unimportant, when we mention that the usual consideration for loss of caste given to a poor woman, who consents to

become wet nurse to a Christian child, is not more than from twenty-five to fifty rupees, and it is well understood that a small proportion of this sum given to the Brahmins, will restore this right of distinction, considered so essential to happiness; the meaning of which, however, many are quite unable to explain.

CHAPTER VI.

SPIRIT OF MUNIFICENCE—ABUSE OF IT—A SHRADDU—DEMANDS UPON THE INDUSTRIOUS—SYSTEM OF EXTORTION—LOW ESTIMATE OF NATIVE TESTIMONY—APTITUDE OF FEMALES FOR LABOR—DIVERSITY OF INDUSTRY—DEGRADING EMPLOYMENTS OF FEMALES IN LARGE CITIES—NATURAL ABILITY OF THE PEOPLE.

THE spirit of munificence, with which we are entertained in tales of the East, is occasionally met with amongst the Hindoos, but the distribution of alms is almost entirely regulated by their religious rites or national customs,—discriminating charity being an operative principle which they have yet to learn. One national abuse in particular, is a great check to the exertions of the industrious poor, and is attended with many grievous consequences, especially to the destitute female population. On the demise of an individual distinguished by rank or wealth, a day is appointed for the distribution of gifts to which the poor are invited from all quarters. This is called a shraddu, in celebration of the funeral rites of the deceased; when the feast already alluded to takes place. We cannot more accurately describe such an assemblage, than by reciting an

account of one which recently took place at Calcutta.¹ The shraddu was conducted with such unparalleled magnificence as to beggar all description. There were no less than four 'daur sagurs' or 'ocean of gifts' in which is comprized the bestowal of land and a variety of silver salvers, water-pots, vases receptacles for pawn, and other utensils. These were given to the most renowned pundits who had been invited. The four 'ocean of gifts' are calculated to have cost 40,000 rupees. Besides this, there were two sets of offerings in which every article of silver included in 'the ocean' was represented in gold. What became of these more precious gifts, we have not been able to discover. Brahmins are not allowed under heavy denunciations, to receive them. It is said that they are sent on some occasions to the shrine at Kali Ghaut; and on others are received either by the family priest, or by some of the Brahmins in secret, whose love of gold exceeds their fear of the curses denounced in their own holy books. There were also given away elephants, horses, palanquin-carriages, and other articles of a similar description. Regarding the invitation and fees given to Brahmins, we find that there were five hundred invitations of the first class sent to learned Brahmins, whose names had been spontaneously selected by Ashootas Deb himself. Each of the

¹ "Friend of India."

Brahmins included in this number, received a gift of money, varying from one hundred and twenty-five to thirty rupees, and a present of food, cloth, brass pots, and other articles, varying in value from sixteen to ten rupees. The second class of invitations made at the recommendation of friends, comprized 1200 priests, and their dismissal fee varied from seventeen to six rupees. The third class consisting of those who received a kind of half invitation, the letter being only half the length of those sent to the first and second classes, embraced 1600 Brahmins, who obtained each from four to two rupees. The fourth class comprised those who had simply received tickets of admission; that is to say, it consisted of every man with a sacerdotal thread who presented himself. The number of these was 12000, and the sum distributed among them, varied from two rupees to eight annas. Thus we have more than 15000 Brahmins assembled on this occasion to partake of the liberality of the Baboo. Of these, 4000 are reported to have sat down to a feast at the house. For three or four days the poor continued to pour into the town from every avenue, like so many files of ants, and were thrust into the houses of nearly seventy of the friends of the family, and thus for the trifling sum they might receive, did thousands of the weaker sex submit to travel on

foot for three and four days, accompanied in many cases by a young family. The misery of this journey to the poor creatures may easily be imagined. But the beggars are not all of the tender sex, many strong and able bodied men accompany them ; and the approach of this formidable train spreads dismay through the villages which lie in its path. Among these poor people 119,000 four anna pieces, and 40,000 eight anna pieces were distributed, and when this sum was exhausted, ten or twelve thousand rupees were brought forth, and cut up into halves and quarters, but still one-fourth of the poor went away empty-handed, and this has cast no little stain on the character of the Baboo. In explanation it is said, that some of the *great beggars* who presided at the distribution of the pittance among the poor beggars, put the bags of money which had been entrusted to them, into palanquins and made away with them, that others after having begun the distribution, suddenly exclaimed that there was not a sufficiency of money, and under pretence of going to the Baboo's house for a further supply, decamped with whatever they could carry off ; and that the doorkeepers having waited long for their return in vain, at length liberated the starving and clamorous multitude. Such acts of dishonesty are, we know, invariably practised whenever a shraddu is of suf-

ficient magnitude to create confusion, and to afford an opportunity of plunder.' This recital goes far to explain into what channel the wealth of the native community flows, and how powerful the body, interested in opposing the dissemination of real knowledge ; but the same spirit is found in operation throughout every class of the Hindoos. The industrious artisan, or the Ryot who labours diligently, has always a sufficient demand upon his earnings from the aged and infirm, and in too many instances from the idle of his own kindred. He must be prepared with his offerings of cloth, of sugar, or some article of current value on the days when the Brahmin attends the family, or his reputation suffers : no sooner is it known that good success has attended his labor, than it is suggested to him to make poojah, or to give a feast, which, simple as it is in its nature, will disburden him of his ready money. Two or three days will pass in entire idleness, large circles sitting on the ground, chewing pawn and smoking the hookah. The women having prepared the currie and rice, and all other requisites for the men, occasionally share in such festivities by dressing in their best sarees, and eating with other of their female neighbours who may join them. The conversation runs almost invariably upon their daily gains, of which the most correct

account is kept; or the party are concerned in some frivolous suit, raised and protracted by one body of men against another in malice or revenge. The charge of murder, highway-robbery, or burglary being often preferred, with a number of witnesses giving the most circumstantial evidence, when after summoning many people from a great distance, it will be discovered to be a fabrication of the most artful description, without a shadow of truth! The value of native testimony is so low, that it is most painful to allude to it. Hard indeed is it to find the individual with moral courage to adhere simply to the truth. In the present weak state of the church gathered out of the heathen, the missionary is often thus placed in circumstances of peculiar difficulty,—converts appealing to him for support in their questions before the magistrate, when however plausible, there is the greatest embarrasment from conflicting testimony. Notwithstanding the indisposition to spontaneous exertion produced by the climate, a short review of the general occupation of the laboring classes will serve to shew the readiness with which females take their part in the tasks allotted them, and that were they treated with the consideration due to the sex, there would be quickness and ability for any occupation, calculated to give strength to their mental powers. Till the rains

fall, the land is quite impenetrable, and there are necessarily tedious intervals in such a climate, when the Ryot unable to work will give himself to sleep. Many districts of Lower Bengal, are, with the first change of season, entirely inundated, and the difficulty of protecting their families and cattle from the sea which forms around them, is very great. As the water recedes from the dwelling, the rice is sown at the edge of a pool or lake, to be ready for transplanting. No sooner have the rains ceased, than we see the laborer with his small oxen, ploughing up to his middle in water; in a very short time his crop is above ground, beautifully verdant: the water however, remains so many months, that these districts are traversed for a large portion of the year in canoes, the rice waving on either side of a very narrow channel, and the boat being forced through it, all distant view is hid, and it is no easy matter to keep the track. The customary mark of separation is a tuft of reeds at each boundary. As soon as the rice is trodden out of the straw by the muzzled ox, the women usually sift and clean it with fans for bazar. Amongst the people we here allude to, on the banks of the Hoogly, south of Calcutta, there are several bodies of Christians, and we are happy to add that some of their children have afforded good promise to their pastors.

The nice attention and delicate fingers of the native of Bengal is well suited to the culture of silk. Although the common silkworm may be considered as indigenous, it is found in a very degenerate state, and the best silk is produced from the worms imported from Italy and China : these however are not readily acclimated,—stormy weather or any neglect being often fatal to the whole crop. The women who are chiefly employed in the care of the silk-worms, are found to be very successful, and if custom permitted it, they would no doubt be good reelers and weavers : men and boys of an early age, under a good and systematic superintendence, soon attain to the standard of the more refined population of Italy. The small hand spinning-wheel is general throughout India, and all the members of a family will take their turn, producing thread which is not surpassed by any machinery. On the contrary, it is the peculiar delicacy of handling, and the moisture from the finger, which have brought the muslins of India to their unrivalled state.

The extreme simplicity of dress in this climate, precludes the demand for plainwork, such a fertile source of employment to females in other countries. The use of the needle is almost exclusively limited to the men, who also embroider in cashmere and muslin. The tailor, who is a

necessary individual in every European household in India, is always a mussulman. It is not our purpose to enumerate each branch of industry found in every community ; rude as may be the execution, it is adapted to the very few wants and simple habits of the people,—each village being able to provide for the wants of its inhabitants, within its own precincts.

The water-pot, the lota, or drinking vessel, containing about a pint, and a large plate for the food, with a small lamp, may be said to be all the vessels they require. The potter caste are numerous, and if they are not found in every village, these necessities are carried about by hawkers throughout the country. The flour is ground by two women seated at the handmill, the employment alluded to in Scripture as continuing till the last. The oil of the cocoa-nut, castor-nut, or mustard-seed is crushed by small mills, consisting of nothing more than the pestal and mortar of wood, turned by an ox, occupying but a little space in the mat enclosure. The consumption is very large for the oiling of the person, and for the lights required by the habit of sitting late in their little shops. It is quite common to see jewellers at the finest work, or the small lathe turning, by a bright little lamp until a very late hour.

In every description of labor, the prominent use of the foot, is a matter of astonishment to Europeans, the power of the toes, by exercise, is rendered but little inferior to our fingers. A rather singular accomplishment with the lower class of women, is the preparation of their fuel; a mixture of cowdung and mud, which with their hands they knead together, and form into cakes, throwing them skilfully, so as to adhere to the sides of their houses; any brick wall in a village, is a favourite place for this drying process.

It is in the cities, that we must be prepared to witness the prevailing spirit of degradation towards the females: numbers of that class who are cast off, and compelled to seek their daily pittance, enlist under a sirdah or chief of their own grade, for work of the most trying description, and on terms the most wretched: pounding brick for the floors of houses, picking cotton, and all the dirty process of skreening, and cleansing the rough produce of the country, is what they chiefly find to do, and many hundreds, with their children, work together in this manner, tasting nothing till sunset, when they may be yet far from their homes.

We cannot but consider it a very encouraging feature with reference to better things, that under discreet direction and good treatment, the Hindoos labor willingly in any new system which European experience, or superior science may suggest.

The new palace at Moorshedabad just finished for the Nawaub of Bengal, is perhaps the finest modern building in India, and the distinguished officer under whose superintendence it has been erected and fitted up, mentions with the highest satisfaction, that he has had no occasion to employ any British architect, but that every branch of the work has been well completed by the natives of the district. We do not lose sight of the ancient monuments of art throughout Hindoostan; but we cite what is now done, as effected by spontaneous exertion, and particularly to be distinguished from that which resulted, from the compulsion of Mahomedan conquerors. With a little tuition, they have even brought nearly all the vegetables of Europe to perfection, in the neighbourhood of Calcutta; the public show of native garden produce, would not disgrace our markets in England. The natives readily acquire the names of plants and flowers, and will travel a considerable distance to make sales, or to superintend gardens when required. The more intimately we are acquainted with the Hindoos, the more clearly is the conviction established, that it is not want of ability which prevents their advancement; but that blighting system of idolatry to which they are so fast bound, as to be incapable of doing anything for their deliverance.

CHAPTER VII.

NECESSITY OF A PRINCIPLE THAT WILL ESTABLISH MUTUAL
CONFIDENCE—ENGLISH EDUCATION—EXCLUSION OF SCRIPTURE
FROM GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS—COMPARATIVE INFLUENCE OF
MISSIONARY LABOR—NATIVE CO-OPERATION NOT TO BE EX-
PECTED—DIFFICULTIES OF FINDING RIGHTLY QUALIFIED
TEACHERS IN INDIA—PROGRESS HITHERTO LIMITED TO THE
POOR—MEANS OF EXTENSION.

IT is the practice in questions of European polity, to contemplate the constitution of society, with reference to certain acknowledged rights, admitted to be inherent in ourselves; and a renovating principle is appealed to, the powers of which, for whatever period they may have been dormant, are never supposed to have ceased entirely: on the contrary, when circumstances call them into action, they often appear to have gathered fresh vigour from the occasion of repose.

No such self-regulating compact is to be found amongst the Hindoos, either in civil or domestic society; which is the great reason for their dis-

union and consequent weakness: the tyranny of caste has expunged any record of the civil rights of man, whilst custom and prejudice have taken the place of law and principle. It is a distinguishing feature of their system, that they must continue in the position of their progenitors, whether good or bad: thus occupations and habits are never changed, but descend from generation to generation. The greatest evil is endured in preference to, what they consider, the slightest innovation of old customs; and in no instance is this more apparent, than in the home circle, where discord, confusion, and misery reign, from the long-established idea, that the wife must and ought to be the slave, instead of the help-meet. There is one exception, however, which we would mention, as in itself worthy of admiration, though sometimes evil in its consequences: the attachment which the Hindoo feels to the inheritance of his fathers; for, like the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, it is neither the better land or the worth of it in money, that would readily induce the exchange, so that property often lies waste and useless, in the hands of its proprietor, which would otherwise become valuable.

It is quite essential for the right direction of measures intended to benefit the people, that the real character of their feelings and customs, should

be understood, and that fear of consequences should never induce even apparent respect for what is evil. The Hindoo knows how to value consistency in others, though he has no courage to maintain it in his own conduct; and it is not indulgence to their prejudices, that gives power over them. No compromise with Hindooism or Mahomedanism, will ever succeed in gaining that influence which will do the people real good. A completely new principle of feeling and action must be given. There are many indeed amongst the Hindoos, and even the Brahmins, who venture to prognosticate, that a new era will soon commence, when their nation will become Christian. But it is not well to indulge here in these deep and interesting anticipations; present duties are sufficiently momentous.

The readiness with which all classes have accepted the national boon of English education, Hindoo and Mussulman attending the same college, shows both a zeal and capability for receiving such knowledge, as may qualify them for employment under government; but shackled as the instruction is, by obligations to which the authorities hold themselves bound, *not to interfere with their religious opinions*, they may alas! 'be ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.'

Encouragement of a much more pleasing charac-

ter is to be derived from the attendance at the missionary schools, where the whole instruction rests upon divine truth. In all the Female and Missionary Boys' schools, the object of giving Christian instruction is avowed in the most open manner, and it is altogether impossible for those who send their children to such institutions, not to know that they are instructed in the Christian religion, and invited to embrace the hopes and promises, as well as confident assurances of the pardoning mercy of God, which are presented to the sinful children of men in the gospel of his son. In the avowed purpose of government to exclude the Scriptures and religious books even from the libraries, the Church and the individual Christian may be said to possess a charter in their favor ; though it is seldom indeed that real conversion takes place whilst the children remain in the schools, they being minors till the age of sixteen ; yet the difference of moral effect under the two systems is very apparent.

With reference to female education, it is impossible for government to interfere ; neither can the means for improving the condition of the female population become the subject of legislation. This makes it important that other means should be discovered, to assist and benefit them. It would be vain to encourage a hope of the Brahmins' assenting, and becoming instrumental in the education

of the sex so degraded. They never can act in concert in any matter which has not the immediate tendency to enrich themselves; and were they so disposed, it must be borne in mind, that their influence would work additional misery, by exposing the female character still more prominently to the influence of the religion of Kali, which is justly designated, 'pure unmixed evil.' Not merely is the absence of confidence in native society a bar to all advancement, but the "fear of man" is exemplified in the Hindoo character to an inconceivable extent, and paralyzes the best powers. It is next to an impossibility to obtain the united attention of natives, even in immediate association with Europeans, for any subject of improvement, though they generally admit its probable advantage, without hesitation. Fair promises of consultation with others are always given, but they seldom, amount to any thing further; for no one has the courage to be *the first to begin any thing new*. We must not therefore indulge any expectation of measures promoting the female welfare, being originated, or finding ready support from the Hindoos themselves.

Hitherto the East Indian population, descendants of Europeans in India, have had little or no weight with the natives: there are but few subjects of interest calculated to bring their united

energies into action, and as an independent community, they are very deficient in those characteristics which qualify for the exercise of influence; if we except their familiar acquaintance with the vernacular language, an attainment which the European acquires with considerable difficulty, and probably never with the same fluency of expression. At Madras, the Rev. C. Tucker has made an important effort to give to the education of the East Indian females, such a direction as may bring valuable assistance to the work; and we trust that the day is not far distant, when many will be so established and settled in the faith, as to give them an influence, beyond that of mere tuition, with the Hindoos. Of the orphan children of European parents, educated in charitable institutions in India, from whom assistance might have been reasonably expected, but few have hitherto become serviceable in this sphere; there is every inducement for these young women to marry early, and a proper fear of associating with the heathen, has degenerated into a prejudice, that any contact with the natives is degrading. An encouraging example has been shown by such as have come forward, and the hope must be indulged, that the education which they receive, may be blessed in qualifying and disposing them to engage in this important service. The time is not yet arrived, that we can

look to the converts to Christianity for any independent efforts; the sufferings which attend the sincere and faithful avowal of the truth, are such as leave them frequently in a state of great weakness, and they themselves are the objects of their pastor's unceasing prayerful attention. Some years must elapse, before children of Christian converts now under instruction, can be fitted, if ever they should be disposed, to engage in duties of charity, towards their benighted countrywomen.

For the reasons thus stated, it seems not only necessary, but natural to look to Christian countries, and especially to England, to supply the means that are required for the instruction of the Hindoos or Mahomedan females. It is clear that native females of good caste need but little encouragement to dispose them to welcome ladies who would visit them with a Christian object: none but such as are experienced in their Christian course can, under existing circumstances, hazard the attempt; and it is equally true, that when not merely the jealous character of the men must be overcome, but if possible, their confidence secured, the character and deportment of the visiting lady should be such as is calculated to command respect.

The 'Ladies' Society' in Calcutta, in the hope

that their countrywomen will not turn a deaf ear to so strong an appeal, have made known their readiness to provide visiting teachers, whenever they may be called for. We cannot however forget that we are taught in the gospel, "that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen: yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are." The dissemination of the Gospel in India is no exception, and in the humble efforts hitherto made for the female population, it is almost exclusively to the poor, that the glad tidings have been carried. That they have not been wholly unwilling hearers, will be evinced by facts, and those who have seen the children under Christian tuition, are struck with the effect of the benefit conferred, legible in their countenances: nor can it be doubted that the marked distinction between the expression of unmeaning vacancy, and that given by a mind occupied with good thoughts, must be more or less perceptible to the parents, to whom the richest blessings may thus be conveyed through the weakest instrumentality.

Though the actual improvement of character is apparently small, under the tuition which has been given ; yet when the children of the lower castes that have been instructed in any of the female schools, are compared with those of the highest rank, the contrast in mind and manner is strikingly in favour of the former.

The effect of European influence upon native society, is however far from being a subject of exultation : for when it is remembered what is the power of example upon the heathen, every one must feel a deep humiliation, and confess that the profession of Christianity in India has hitherto been very unproductive. As a nation, we are progressively brought into a nearer connexion with the millions of our fellow-subjects in India, and their welfare should not merely be the concern of residents in the east, who have many claims upon them ; but occupy the prayerful and constant endeavours of the church at large.

In a work of this character, the disproportion of time and means to the magnitude of the undertaking, would be altogether an overwhelming discouragement, unless it be viewed in the light of a direct fulfilment of the commandment of our Lord. To the minds of such as think that happiness can exist where the gospel is unknown, and that the Hindoo, being enlightened by useful knowledge

alone, will care for the moral and intellectual condition of their females, no expectation of carrying conviction can be entertained; but such persons are entreated to search still closer into the subject, with the sincere desire that infinite wisdom may teach them to distinguish between truth and error.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUBDIVISION OF CHARITABLE EFFORTS—CLASSIFICATION OF LABOR—MISS COOKE'S ARRIVAL.—AVOWAL OF MOTIVES—DISCUSSION WITH THE NATIVE WOMEN—MISTRUST OF PARENTS—FORMATION OF SCHOOLS—PATRONAGE OF THE MARCHIONESS OF HASTINGS—VOLUNTARY ATTENDANCE AT EXAMINATION—CONCENTRATION OF LABOR REQUISITE.

THE necessity of an avowed Christian direction to the efforts which may effect the elevation of the Hindoo females from their present degradation to their proper level, having been prominently set forth, the history of past attempts is offered in the hope of exciting further endeavours on their behalf.

In the present early stage, we have to notice the subdivision of labor, which affords ample scope for diversity of talent and experience. The nature of the work, demanding constant exercise of patience, must beget occasional feelings of discouragement, under which a sanguine expectation may be reasonably entertained that, when one branch is languishing, there may be the full ear, promising an ample harvest, in another.

We may class the efforts with which we are acquainted, thus—

First: General gratuitous education of female native children of Hindoos and Mussulmans promiscuously, without limitation of age, at day schools supported by voluntary contributions, where the scriptures are the prominent subject of instruction.

Secondly: The same object carried on by individual residents, children being collected on their own premises, and at their own expence.

Thirdly: The visiting females of the higher castes in their dwellings, with the same Christian object.

Fourthly: The gathering of orphan children from the heathen, and maintaining them in asylums or privately, for their education as Christians.

Fifthly: Taking charge of the children of native converts, to board and educate them consistently with their baptismal profession.

Of the first branch, the Central School at Calcutta claims particular mention, as being the institution which primarily engaged the general public attention in Bengal.

The history of this establishment is more or less known, through the medium of the annual reports of the Ladies Society for Promoting Native Female Education, established in Calcutta, and notices in periodical publications. It was in May 1821, that the lady so prominently instru-

mental in this work, Mrs. Wilson, then Miss Cooke, left England for India, bearing a recommendation from the British and Foreign School Society to the Calcutta School Society, in furtherance of her strong desires to be made useful to the poor neglected females of India. She reached Calcutta in November; but the Committee of the Society to whom Miss Cooke looked for aid and support in her plans, being composed partly of native gentlemen, were not prepared unanimously and actively to engage in any general plan for native female education; therefore an arrangement was entered into with the corresponding committee of the Church Missionary Society, who took the necessary measures for the establishment of female schools. Whilst engaged in studying the Bengali language, and scarcely daring to hope that an immediate opening for entering upon the work, to which she had devoted herself, would be found, Miss Cooke paid a visit to one of the native schools for boys, in order to observe their pronunciation; and this circumstance, trifling as it might appear, led to the opening of her first school in Thunthuniya. Unaccustomed to see a European lady in that part of the native town, a crowd collected round the door of the school, amongst them was an interesting looking little girl, whom the school pundit drove

away; Miss Cooke desired the child to be called, and by an interpreter asked her, if she wished to learn to read? She was told in reply, that this child had for three months past been daily begging to be permitted to learn to read with the boys, and that if Miss Cooke (who had made known her purpose of devoting herself to the instruction of native girls) would attend next day, twenty girls should be collected. Accompanied by a female friend conversant with the language, she repeated her visit on the morrow, and found fifteen girls, several of whom had their mothers with them. Their natural inquisitiveness prompted them to inquire, what could be Miss Cooke's motive for coming amongst them? They were told that, 'she had heard in England that the women of their country were kept in total ignorance, that they were not taught to read or write, that the men only were allowed to attain any degree of knowledge, and it was also generally understood, that, the chief obstacle to their improvement was that no females would undertake to teach them; she had therefore felt compassion for them, and had left her country, her parents, and friends, to help them.' The mothers with one voice cried out, (smiting themselves with their right hands) 'O what a pearl of a woman is this!' It was added, 'she has given up every earthly expectation, to

come here, and seeks not the riches of this world, but desires only to promote your best interests.' 'Our children are yours, we give them to you,' was the reply of two or three of the women at once. One of them asked, 'What will be the use of learning to our girls, and what good will it do them?' She was told 'it would make them more useful in their families, and increase their knowledge, and it was hoped that it would also tend to gain them respect, and produce harmony in their families.' 'True,' said one of them, 'our husbands now look upon us as little better than brutes.' Another asked, 'What benefit will you derive from this work?' She was told, 'the only return wished for was, to promote their best interest and happiness.' Then said the woman, 'I suppose this is a holy work, and well-pleasing to God.' As they were not able to understand much, it was only said in return, 'that God was always well pleased, that his servants should do good to their fellow-creatures.' The women then spoke to each other in terms of the highest approbation, of what had passed.

This explanation of Miss Cooke's plans, seemed to have prevented much suspicion from being entertained as to her motives, and according to the habit of the natives, when any advantage may accrue, petitions for female schools were presented

from different quarters of the native town; and eight schools were speedily established. One instance of the mistrust with which untutored minds are apt to view disinterested efforts for their good, occurred. The girl who first presented herself at Thunthuniya, after having attended daily for some weeks, was withdrawn, and under pretext of going to a distance to make poojah, or worship, was absent about a fortnight, although daily enquiry was made for her: her father one day presented a paper, written in English, which he required Miss Cooke to sign, and promised in that case to send his child to school again. This proved to be an agreement, by which Miss Cooke was to bind herself, to make no claim upon the child hereafter, on the ground of educating her, and that her parents should be at full liberty, to take her away when they chose. The paper being signed, the child returned to school. Thus in 1822, eight little schools for girls were formed, of which the detail is given, to shew the real nature of the work.

✓ The first Thunthuniya commenced, Jan. 25, with twelve children, but they soon increased to twenty-five.

Jan. 16. The Mirzapore school was opened by a pundit, collecting fifteen girls; the population in this neighbourhood being chiefly Mussulman (who change their places of abode, as the place

of their employment may suggest,) a regular attendance by the same children, was much prevented.

Feb. 12. In consequence of a petition for a female school, signed by several inhabitants, with twenty-two names of children, as wishing to learn to read, affixed, a place was taken in the adjoining neighbourhood for them to assemble in: The same number of children were collected, but they were other than those whose names had been given.

March 25. At a school opened in Soho-bazar, seventeen girls were collected by the master, some from 12 to 15 years of age, they proved however less regular in attendance, and more quarrelsome than the smaller children.

April 2. Krishna Bazar school, was formed, contained forty-five girls, collected by a respectable pundit.

April 30. Shyan Bazar school, a very active Mussulman woman assembled eighteen girls, the numbers soon increased to forty-five.

May 3. Mullick Bazar. This school had twenty-seven scholars; it laboured under the disadvantage of a very ignorant master, but as he had great influence among the people, it was thought best not to part with him.

May 18. Koomer Tolly school, was formed. Eighteen girls were collected by the pundit.

At the end of four months from Jan. 12, 1822, Miss Cooke's efforts had been so far blessed, and attended with more favourable results than she had anticipated. The number of girls then on the school list, was two hundred and seventeen; about two hundred in daily attendance. The review of these her first efforts, was therefore far from discouraging. With respect to the influence on the children themselves, Miss Cooke perceived sufficient good effects, to hope for more. When they were first assembled, it was difficult to get them either to sit or stand still, much more so, to keep them reading or writing, for a quarter of an hour at a time; and it occurred more than once at the first opening of the schools, that while changing the card, on which the girls were reading the alphabet, the children had disappeared. The master very coolly said, 'they were gone to eat.' After a little while however, they became as anxious to remain as long as she did, and the parents appeared to take an interest in their children's learning. One poor woman used to bring her little children two miles, and wait to take them home; and in one instance a respectable man stood over his little daughter, the whole time of lessons.

A very decent woman took her niece to Miss Cooke and said, 'Pray make her wise or learned,

it is all I wish for her." Another woman complained that the pundit did not teach her daughter fast enough: and a great girl, urged to take more pains on account of her age, said, 'indeed she wished to learn and that she repeated her letters and spelling day and night.' These little incidents gave indications of a brighter day, that would sometime or other dawn upon the poor females of India, and for the time, amidst much that appeared adverse, served to uphold a stedfast hope.

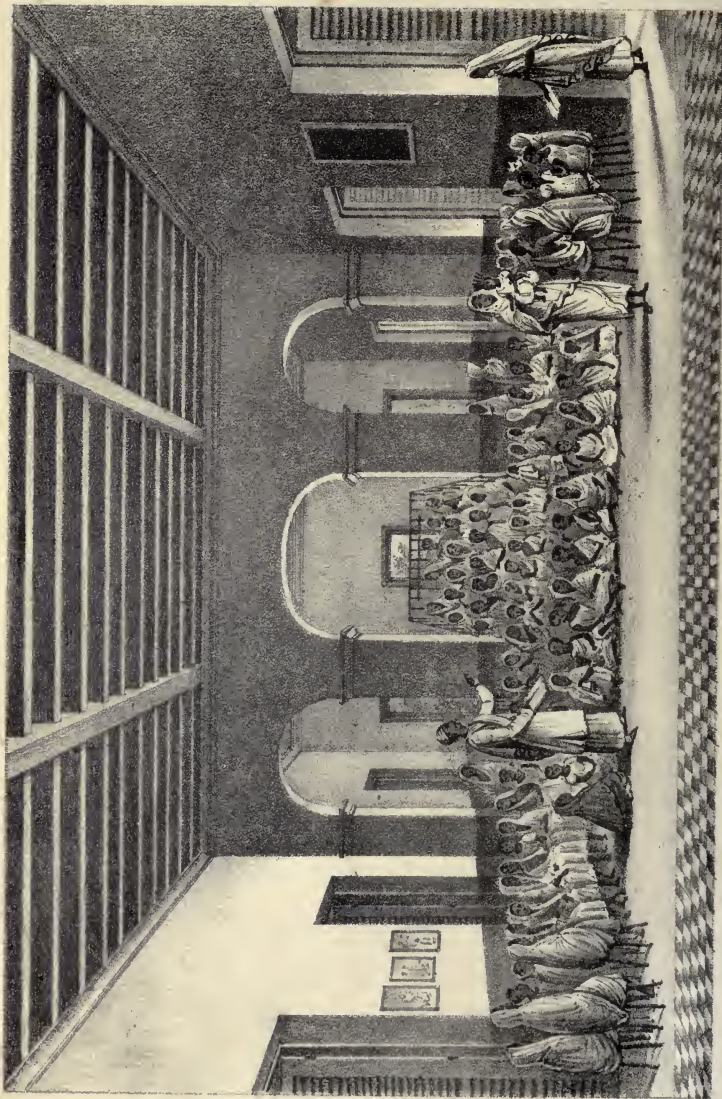
In 1823 the number of schools was increased to twenty-two, and of scholars to four hundred.

The Marchioness of Hastings afforded great encouragement to the establishment of these schools; she not only patronized the commencement, but gave work to be done by the children, and a few days before her departure from India, visited in person most of the schools, inspected the classes, commending those who had made the greatest proficiency, and encouraged them by rewards. The parents were much attracted by her ladyship's goodness in visiting lanes and gullies, where Europeans are scarcely ever seen, and won by her kind and condescending notice of their children. On June 23, a general examination of the first and second classes of all the female schools took place at the Mission House at Mirzapore. When public notice was given, it was not known

that the day fixed for the examination, was a noted Hindoo holiday, a very small attendance was consequently apprehended; in this instance however the children were allowed to do as they pleased, and out of one hundred and twenty requested to attend, not more than ten were absent, five of whom were ill. The first classes were able to read with ease 'the Tract on Female Education,' by a learned pundit, rather a difficult book from the number of Sanscrit phrases. Others read in books of fables, and in Watts' Catechism, translated into Bengali; their needlework was then shewn, and the composure and seeming delight with which the little creatures went through the task, seated at the feet of their kind patronesses, much exceeded what had been anticipated. Rewards were distributed from a stock left by Lady Hastings. Seventeen months previous to this examination none of these children nor the young women who had qualified themselves as teachers, knew a letter of the alphabet, nor could they have been persuaded to have entered the house of a European. The idea of learning to sew they reluctantly received, regarding it as degrading; but after a time the inquiry was, 'What, no work to-day?' This altered feeling was more or less apparent; a girl eleven years old begun to instruct her two elder sisters at home, and in another quarter of

the town, a child of the same age, taught her little sister who was only six years old, to repeat nearly the whole of Watts' Catechism. When Miss Cooke first entered upon this work, she was usually accompanied by a Brahmin youth, who had learned English in one of the Society's schools. This was now no longer necessary, from her having made progress in the language, and from the eagerness of the children to assist. It was made known in the schools that if the best readers were present and neatly dressed, when Miss Cooke should call, some of them should accompany her in a palanquin carriage, to visit the other schools; by six in the morning the best girls were in the school-room clean and neat, and those selected, went with manifest pleasure to assist her to teach in the other schools. Encouraged by these favourable circumstances, the Church Missionary Committee, in February 1823, circulated proposals for the concentration of the work, by the erection of the Central School.





INTERIOR OF CENTRAL SCHOOL.

CHAPTER IX.

FORMATION OF THE LADIES SOCIETY FOR NATIVE FEMALE EDUCATION IN CALCUTTA—FOUNDATION OF THE CENTRAL SCHOOL LAID—EXAMINATION OF THE CHILDREN—MRS. WILSON'S REPORT OF THE WORK—CENTRAL SCHOOL OPENED—ANECDOTES OF THE CHILDREN.

THE Ladies' Society for Native Female Education in Calcutta and its vicinity, of which the Right Hon. Lady Amherst, consented to be Patroness, was formed in March 1824, and in the month of June, the corresponding committee of the Church Missionary Society made over to their charge the native schools for girls; the superintendence of which remained undisturbed in the hands of Mrs. Wilson, late Miss Cooke. Her husband, the Rev. J. Wilson, being a missionary in connexion with

the Church Missionary Society resident at Mirzapore, was well qualified to render her every valuable support in the work. The second public examination of the schools, then numbering from four to five hundred scholars, was held in December, 1824, at the vestry room of the old church. The scene was striking, and many of the women and children evinced a proficiency truly astonishing, when the obstacles they had to surmount were considered. The first classes read the New Testament, not only with facility, but with evident comprehension of its meaning; specimens of their needlework and writing were exhibited, and both surpassed the most sanguine expectations, that could have been entertained when the work was first commenced. After the examination, suitable rewards were distributed, and a variety of contributions were disposed of amongst the visitors, the proceeds being set apart for the erection of a central school, this was the first sale held in Calcutta for the benefit of the Ladies' Society. The foundation stone of the Central School was laid on the 18th of May, 1826, on the eastern corner of Cornwallis Square, in the district of Simlah, being in the centre of the thickest, as well as the most respectable Hindoo population. A brass plate having the following inscription, was deposited with the usual ceremonies.

CENTRAL SCHOOL
FOR THE EDUCATION OF
NATIVE FEMALES,
FOUNDED BY A SOCIETY OF LADIES
WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED ON MARCH 25, 1824.

PATRONESS

THE RIGHT HON. LADY AMHERST.
GEORGE BALLAND, Esq. Treasurer.
MRS. HANNAH ELLERTON, Secretary.
MRS. MARY ANN WILSON, Superintendent.

This Work was greatly assisted by a liberal donation of sicca
rupees 20,000 from

RAJAH BOIDONATH ROY BAHADUR.

The foundation stone was laid on the 18th May, 1826, in the
seventh year of the reign of
His Majesty King George IV.

The Right Hon. WM. PITT, LORD AMHERST,
Governor-General of India.

C. K. ROBINSON, Esq. Gratuitous Architect.

The Venerable Archdeacon Corrie, whose
memory is justly blessed in connexion with every
work of Christian charity, offered prayer for the
divine blessing upon the institution.

The gift of Rajah Boidonath was an example
of native munificence most thankfully welcomed,
as an encouragement to the nation to embrace the

occasion to lay aside their unhappy prejudice ; for sometime he continued to give a kind countenance to the work, and Mrs. Wilson was admitted to visit the Rané, on the most friendly terms, instructing her in the English language. At a later period when the Central School was in full operation, the Rané expressed a wish to see it, and consented to meet several ladies on the occasion of her visit ; she was extremely delighted, and made a most pleasing impression upon all who were present. Not long after, the Rajah withdrew almost entirely from public life, and although it is ascertained that the Rané maintains an unceasing regard for Mrs. Wilson, it has not been considered etiquette for her to receive any stranger as formerly.

Collections in London, forwarded through the Church Missionary Society amounted to £500, and in Calcutta to 2000 rupees : Numerous other donations were received, giving a total sum for the building, of 45,000 rupees. The prosecution of the work has since depended entirely upon voluntary contributions.

We return to the annual examinations of the children, as important to establish their readiness to embrace the benefit of education, and their ability will no longer be a matter of question, especially when it is remembered that there is a

constant succession of children, and many other hindrances, which will appear in the further history of the work.

In December 1825, the female children were examined in the Church Mission library, Mirzapore; specimens of needlework and writing were exhibited, which afforded very pleasing testimony of their improvement, and it was with peculiar pleasure that one little girl about three years old, was observed, when brought to Lady Amherst, to repeat correctly the Lord's prayer in her own native language; others had committed to memory the commandments, and several could repeat correctly the whole of a little book on the Principles of the Christian Religion. Mrs. Wilson furnished the following observations on the course of the labors of the society.' The children afford us, on the whole, much gratification, and make tolerable progress, and could they be placed under Christian teachers instead of heathens, no doubt they would be more regular in their attendance, and make corresponding improvement. I believe our female schools are doing much in a general way towards bringing us better acquainted with the Hindoos, and not only are the prejudices against teaching females giving way, but a very decided preference is now manifested in favour of the object. The parents of the children are chiefly

poor, and always ignorant. Calling the other day at a school, I was delighted with two little sisters, one four the other five years old ; they stood up as if to exhibit their attainments, and repeated several little hymns which they had committed to memory. On my remarking they were good children, and by coming to school every day would soon read well, the people observed, ' and their parents are very wise, for they say if the girls do not come daily, we are to fetch them and beat them.' I generally find the teachers very inattentive to their work, and have not more than two or three whose word I can believe. Notwithstanding all the checks that are employed, it seems next to impossible to keep them actively engaged among the children, during the hours they are in the school. Again, holidays and poojahs have a very bad effect upon the minds of the children ; it frequently happens after their public feasts, that the children have either nearly forgotten all they had learned, or else feel restless and careless about their lessons ; early marriages operate also as a sad hindrance to their improvement. The more respectable natives still continue to manifest great apathy concerning the education of their daughters ; yet in spite of many, many discouragements, the work goes on far beyond what I first anticipated, several hundred children are brought together ; their minds are usefully

employed, and their habits begin to assume something of a more rational and pleasing appearance.'

In December 1826, an examination of the little girls took place at the Episcopal residence, the appearance of the scholars was increasingly satisfactory, a considerable proportion were of an age capable of benefitting by the instruction imparted, and of four hundred girls in daily attendance, about two hundred were examined,—some in the little work on Geography, others in the Gospels, and some in Watts' Catechism, and in 'Conversations between a mother and her daughter,' a simple book written for their instruction, to which they are very partial. A poor blind girl exhibited considerable interest; she had from listening to the other children, got by heart many passages from the Gospels, and repeated very correctly the greater part of the second chapter of St. Luke. Among the specimens of needlework there was a sampler very well executed by a native Christian woman, and presented to Lady Hastings with the following words embodied:

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE
MOST NOBLE HOUSE OF HASTINGS,
WE POOR HINDOO FEMALES
FIRST BEGAN TO ENJOY THE BLESSINGS OF
EDUCATION,
FEBRUARY, 1822.

On the 1st of April, 1828, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson took possession of the Central School, and commenced with fifty-eight girls. Mrs. Wilson had succeeded in drawing the nineteen small schools into three large divisions, and in these divisions the number of children was two hundred and fifty. It was on the 17th Dec. 1828, that the first examination was held at the Central School. There was one class of teachers or monitors consisting of twenty-five native females; young as they were, they were all either widows or forsaken by their husbands: they had been educated in the schools of the Society, and when they became destitute, they had recourse to Mrs. Wilson, who was thus able to employ them in the service of their country women.

In Dec. 1829, Miss Ward, who had joined Mrs. Wilson from England, to assist in her labors, and was left in charge of the Central School, (during Mrs. Wilson's temporary absence to the upper provinces, seeking, with the benefit of her health, the further extension of operations,) gives the following report. The daily attendance of the girls is from one hundred and fifty to two hundred, divided into twenty classes, four of which comprising fifty girls, are reading the Acts, St. Matthew's gospel, and Pearce's geography, they also write upon slates from dictation; six other classes

containing sixty girls, read the Bible History and other elementary books; the other ten classes spell on cards, and learn the alphabet. It was however remarked that, the usual interruptions to the labors continued in full force, and would not cease to exist while the parents remained in the same state of ignorance. Very recently on inquiry of a woman, accustomed to bring from sixteen to twenty children, to the school, why she had brought so few, she said six girls are to be betrothed to-day, and several others are gone to visit them.' The eldest of these children is not more than ten, the two younger four or five. But some facts in connection with the children will be found interesting. More cases of death amongst the children were brought to the knowledge of the teachers, and the dying testimony of a little girl from the lower classes, who died of fever after fifteen days illness, was very encouraging. The account was given by her Hindoo mother, and she affirmed that the child had from the commencement of her illness daily asked to be taken to the Central School, telling her mother, she could remain with her no longer, as she must become a Christian, and the great God was calling her. Her mother reminded her of their idols, and asked whether she would not worship them. 'No, they are false and useless,' was the reply. The child fixed a day on which she was to be taken to

the Central School; it was rather a distant one, but noted by the Hindoos, being the first of a Heathen festival. As the appointed day dawned however, her spirit took its flight: she assured her mother to the last, she knew she was going to the great God. The poor mother seemed to take no comfort for some little time, but in hovering around the school, coming in when it was open, walking among the classes, weeping and exclaiming, 'Ah! here are all the other children indeed! but mine is not!'

A girl about eight years old lost her mother, and was left without any known relative: she expressed a wish to live with Mrs. Wilson, and to become a Christian, but the moment this was known, the old woman in whose house the mother died, declared she had owed her thirty rupees for rent, which if Mrs. Wilson would pay, the child should be given up to her. At the same time however she went to a magistrate, and by claiming the child as a relative, got the little girl made over to her, telling the neighbours that when the child married, she should get more money than would pay the debt.

A very poor Heathen woman (a widow) with one daughter six years old, had been staying a short time in the family of a native Christian, belonging to the Institution; through one of its

members, she became employed in the school, and begged Mrs. Wilson to take her child. She was told that, those children were preferred who had no parents, but that she might bring her girl, and Mrs. Wilson would see what could be done. Instead however of coming, she sent her child very scantily clothed and dirty, bidding her remain with Mrs. Wilson, and say 'that her mother had thrown her away.' The woman did not make her appearance again till the child was baptized, which she heard of with evident pleasure, though she said nothing, but about two months afterwards presented herself to be instructed, and received for baptism.

In 1833, there appeared to be little to record that was new respecting the children ; seven girls from the gospel classes requested to be appointed monitors, by which arrangement they earn a small sum of money, and are retained longer under instruction, at an age best qualified for benefiting by it. One of these teachers being ill, requested Mrs. Wilson to go and see her at her own house. On being questioned as to her knowledge of the Scriptures and prayer, she assured her kind instructress before many witnesses that she both read the Scriptures in private, and prayed to God through Jesus Christ, and that in doing so, she found great comfort. Several young Brahmins

were present who paid great attention to her answers, and one of these youths produced an English Bible, inquiring the meaning of several passages. About the same time a girl of ten years of age, called several times at the house of the Catechist belonging to the Central School, expressing her anxious wish to become a Christian, and begging to be allowed to take food with the family, by which act she would lose caste, when she thought her father would be willing to give her up. The Catechist at length brought her to Mrs. Wilson, who considering her extreme youth, and fearing some domestic quarrel had made her wish to leave her home, desired the Catechist to take her to her father's house, and inquire of him, whether he were willing to let the child attend school again? The child was very averse to returning. The father appeared civil and said he would reason with her, and if after three days he could not persuade her to change her mind, he would give her up to Mrs. Wilson. It appeared that the girl's wish to become a Christian was known to all the neighbours. Hearing nothing further on the subject, at the end of a week, the Catechist was sent to inquire the father's determination. He then appeared very firm, and said 'he should by no means give up his daughter to Mrs. Wilson, and that he had not only forbidden

her to attend school again, but to prevent the possibility of her doing so, he had removed her to the house of a married sister, who would watch her closely;’ thus all trace of this promising girl was lost.

CHAPTER X.

ADVANTAGE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF MEDICINE—GRANT OF THE MEDICAL BOARD TO THE SCHOOL—CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IN THE SCHOOL—SEVERAL ADULTS BAPTIZED—FURTHER ANECDOTES OF THE CHILDREN—ANNUAL REPORTS, 1837, 1838—CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN CONNEXION WITH THE CENTRAL SCHOOL.

THE progress of the Hindoo Students at the Calcutta Medical College, is the subject of much astonishment, several young men have recently passed the strictest examination with credit, and have received their diploma, qualifying them to practice as physicians. May this and every other benefit derived from British influence, be overruled for the spiritual welfare of these poor people. Some acquaintance with medical science will afford the missionary great advantages, the poor gladly receiving drugs from a Christian, whose kindness begets confidence ; whilst the rich in cases of extremity amongst the women, will even call in an English physician to their aid, though he is only permitted to see the patient so covered up, that the tongue and wrist are alone exposed to view. The Calcutta Medical Board grant medicines for

the school, which have been constantly in request. A Mahomedan woman rushed into the school house one Sunday morning, carrying her little girl, who was a scholar, in her arms. The child appeared to be dying of cholera; the best available means were applied, and she revived: on being raised up, she saw a plate of boiled rice, which one of the inmates had set by, to eat at her leisure, the sick girl begged hard for some, but for a long time the prejudices of the mother would not allow her to touch it; at length joy, at seeing the child so much better, overcame every other feeling, and with strong emotions, pushing the plate towards her said, 'Come what will, take, eat; but you are no longer mine.' Turning to those who stood around the woman, exclaimed, 'You have been the means of restoring her, she and her five sisters are yours:' this child continued to go to the school as usual, but the other sisters were prevented by the father-in-law.

There having been no difficulty in establishing the order of Christian worship in the house, it is the custom at the close of lessons, to seat the teachers and children in circles, one within the other, for prayer. On Saturday the native Catechist addresses them from such part of Scripture as may appear suitable: The children alluding to this instruction, often ask for 'church,'

as they call it, and are heard to say to one another, 'we will come to-morrow because it is 'Greega,' or church.' Annual examinations on the plan of those already mentioned report in continuance until 1833, a steady perseverance in the work. In 1834, Peeree, an elderly Hindoo woman, was baptized, and became a valuable helper in teaching the young children: this poor woman was first led to desire admission into the Central School, from hearing the daily conversation of two little sisters, who were in the upper classes, on the subject of their school and lessons. Also a young Hindoo woman was baptized, who had been taught in one of the small schools seven years before; within that period, she lost all her near relatives, and was thus left at liberty to indulge a desire, long entertained, of becoming a Christian; she was taken into employment in attendance upon the sick. Another baptism was that of a Hindoo girl about eleven years old, a day scholar, residing with an elder brother and his family: of her own accord, she presented herself a candidate, and resisted all importunities of her friends to return.

The report of 1835 states the number of children under tuition, to be from two hundred and fifty, to three hundred. In the course of the year fifty to sixty girls, of the upper classes, had in con-

sequence of marriage, ceased to attend. They had all read more or less of the New Testament. Even these girls are not insensible to the misery of early marriages, several have endeavoured to resist such baby betrothments for two or three years successively; and it is not a very unusual occurrence for them to assure their instructors that they only wish to be allowed to become Christians, to live and learn with Mrs. Wilson's orphan children, whom they were accustomed to see in a department of the Central School, progressing in regular Christian habits. One fine girl, who there is reason to hope is a Christian at heart, not being allowed either to come to the school and join the Christian community, or to defer her marriage any longer, contrived to obtain a promise from her husband that she should continue to attend the school, where she was monitor: it is stated that she has since taught her husband to read. A girl of similar standing, of a remarkably staid disposition, having often expressed a desire for baptism, left the house of her father-in-law at Barnagore, and arrived at the Central School one evening just as the inmates were gone to church. She requested that food might be given her immediately (by partaking of which she would be counted as having lost her caste,) to prevent her family taking her back again. The orphan children left at home, to whom she

was known, consulted among themselves, and some thought that she ought not to eat till Mrs. Wilson returned; and should give her permission; but an elder girl replied, 'that as Mrs. Wilson prayed daily for the conversion of the gospel classes, she would of course be happy to receive her,' and therefore she ventured to give her food. Mrs. W. heard nothing of all this till the morning, when she saw the girl walking in the compound. For three weeks she resisted every entreaty to return home, during which time her betrothed, a youth of fourteen, was compelled to renounce his engagement and marry another. At length the girls' mother, who lived near the school, feigned madness for the loss of her daughter, which so worked upon the feelings of the poor child, that she was induced to return to her. Still she hovered about the school, and was, after a while, readmitted as a day teacher; having promised her mother not to be baptized till after her death.

In 1836 no variation in the course of instruction occurred, but occasional pleasing incidents confirmed the hope that however little progress is apparent, the labors of the institution are not in vain. A girl, about ten years old, who had been a regular attendant at the school for more than a year, and was able to read the Bible History, was one day observed to remain after all the other

children were dismissed. She told her teacher, who happened to be a convert, that she wished to stay with her and become a Christian. She was asked 'whether she had parents or a husband living?' 'Yes,' she replied, 'then you must first speak to them.' 'I have done so, but they threaten to beat me, and my mother says I shall lose caste.' From day to day this child entreated with many tears to be taken in, saying how unkindly she was treated on account of her wish to become a Christian, she would linger for hours after school at the gate, but as the consent of the parent for the adoption of so young a child was essential, it was impossible to receive her. She pressed her point with tears once more, but being again refused, she took a most reluctant leave, saying, 'Then you will see my face no more.' After waiting some time near the house, she went away, and although great pains were taken, all inquiries for her proved to be vain. To witness such a disposition as this, so full of sincerity, and to be conscious of the real suffering it must entail upon the child, without being able to aid further in the nurture of the good seed sown in her heart, or to afford any timely relief, is an experience which throws the labourer both for his own support, and that of others, directly at the feet of his master.

Three little girls who attended the school,

absenting themselves for a month, were asked, why it so happened? the eldest amongst them, about eight years old, replied. 'If you knew how angry our father is when we come to school, you would not wonder that we stay away; we are glad to come, and our mother likes us to come, but our father forbids it, and when he knows it, he beats our mother; he never beats us, but he calls us bad girls.' These children, though compelled to be often absent, read remarkably well, which was accounted for by their saying that when they had books given to them, they hid them between the mats of the house, and read them when their father went out to work, or at night. Two sisters of these girls were formerly in the school, and married away. We thus perceive the difficulty there is to secure a regular attendance of the children: another anecdote will show that when their circumstances throw the greatest hindrances in the way, the children are often more than willing recipients of the benefit proposed for them. A girl who was observed to come only four months in the year, being asked the reason of such a broken attendance, said that she lived usually with her mother-in-law, in the country, but she came once a year to see her mother, and then to the school, but if her mother-in-law knew it, she would be displeased. I have not forgotten what I was taught

and when I am at home I remember it. What I learned by heart, I repeat again and again in my own mind.'

The children often ask for hymn books; once when the enquiry was made, why they wanted them? they said, 'we all meet together and sing the hymns we learn, and the neighbours come and ask us, who taught us these words? we tell them of our school, but if we had books, we could sing them better, and tell them the words we sing;'

In 1837 the superintendence of the school being transferred to Miss Thompson and Miss White, the work has steadily progressed, and further instances of the confidence the children feel, whilst under the school protection, are to be noticed. A child of six years old came in, saying 'she had formerly been a scholar, that, on returning home one day, she found her parent's house burnt, and her mother being very poor, had sold her to a wicked woman, who collected children for vicious purposes, with whom there were many besides herself; she was cruelly treated and beaten, and had often been thinking of making her escape to the Central School, as she was sure the white ladies would not beat her; at last she had succeeded and ran off.' No inquiry being made for her, and there being every reason to believe the account the child gave of herself,

she was received, and afterwards admitted to the Orphan Refuge.

Another old scholar of the reading class, came at day break to the gate, waiting for admittance. She said that her mother who always treated her cruelly, was going to send her to her husband; four successive days did she come, and was taken away. The last time she escaped to the school, her mother followed, accompanied by two men and three women; the cause of the poor girl was pleaded in vain; and further interference being altogether impracticable, the child was advised to submit to her mother's wishes: she has not since been seen at the school.

The annual report of 1838, states that the school is continued under the superintendence of Miss Thompson. The attendance has been maintained upon a fair average (250 to 300,) falling off during an unusual season of sickness, when many died of cholera and smallpox. The classification and course of tuition, have undergone little variation; the first class have learned large portions of scripture by heart, very creditably, and have attained some knowledge of geography, and natural history, in connexion with their Bible studies. Four of the first class girls who have shewn much ability, have consented to become monitors, receiving for teaching in the gospel class,

one rupee per month, in the others, twelve annas. The children are divided into twenty-six classes, four for the elder girls, who read the Gospels, the Acts, or any religious book that may appear suitable ; there are about ten girls in each of these classes. The next are the girls of the Bible history ; at present there are only four classes with eight or ten children in each : this Bible history is a little book containing an epitomised account of the Old and New Testament. The children below these, learn to read Watts' catechism ; these are also divided into four classes, two taught by two Brahmins containing each ten or twelve girls, two others of six and eight children. Of the rest, some are disposed of in numbers of about eight or ten each, learning the alphabet and spelling from cards arranged for the purpose, and about fifty little girls have commenced upon the infant system. The children remain three hours in school, and during the last hour are formed into large divisions, taught scripture or hymns by dictation, or questioned on what they have learned ; singing, and sometimes counting, occupies part of this time. The school is closed each day with a hymn and prayer by the catechist. The following encouraging occurrences of the year are noticed.

A child of about nine years of age, who had attended the school for two or three years, and

was reading the Gospels in the first class, being contrary to her usual habits, absent two days, enquiries were made of the Brahmin under whose protection she was sent. He merely said, ' she was ill and would return shortly ; ' however on the following Sunday, she came to the school with her mother, and begged to see Miss White, and with tears expressed her great desire to become a Christian. She earnestly entreated that she and her mother might be taken in and protected from the violence of their own kindred : The mother explained that ' she was no Christian, but owing to the importunities of the girl, she had often listened to the words she had brought her home from school, and that she now followed her in consequence of the child's determination to leave her, rather than remain any longer with heathen people ; that there was an old man, her grandfather, who was extremely opposed to their becoming Christians, and had threatened to detain them, if they avowed such an intention ; they had therefore left their home unknown to him, and came to seek the protection they so much needed. At their own desire they were sent to Mrs. Wilson's Refuge. The child was admitted into the school with the orphans, the woman was employed in work, partaking at the same time of the benefits of instruction. The grandfather, a pensioned sepoy

on seven rupees per month, was informed where they were residing, and invited to see them: he went thither, and the meeting was very interesting. The old man on taking his leave, declared that 'he could not live without them, and would come and take up his abode there, that he might also have Christian instruction.' He has since sold a keranchy, a native carriage for hire, which formed the means of his livelihood. His daughter lives with him at Agraparah. The grandchild, now named Louisa, continues to go on well in the Orphan School.

A little girl of seven years, whose mother is a Christian teacher in the Central School, during the prevailing sickness of this season, was seized with smallpox. Though whilst in the school, poor little Luckie, as she was named, was remarkably indocile and unpromising, there was at her death every appearance of the spirit of grace having made her love the Saviour, she was deprived of sight almost immediately after the illness seized her, but was preserved patient and uncomplaining; expressing herself not merely without fear with respect to death, but saying to her mother that 'she need not now give her musquito curtains, as she was going to leave her.' On being asked, what she meant? she said, 'I am going away very soon, I am going to a better

place, I am going to Jesus—you need not be sorry.’

Another child, about seven years old, who has been in the A B C classes for some weeks, remained after the rest of the children, and begged Miss Thompson to keep her, as she was an orphan, and wished to become a Christian. The little girl was received, and a few days after, no inquiries being made for her, she was sent to the Orphan Refuge, where she still remains.

It has been found necessary from the commencement of the work, to employ native matrons or confidential persons, as messengers and protectors, to conduct the girls to and from school, they receiving as a salary a pice for each child committed to their care. The employment of any such agency would have been gladly dispensed with, but no better arrangement, securing the confidence of the parents, and the safety of the children, has hitherto been devised. This has given rise to an impression, which many who are inimical to a directly Christian system of instruction, have without inquiry, readily adopted, ‘that the attendance of the children is purchased.’ That there is, without the concurrence of the superintendents, a partial participation between the children and the messengers is admitted; but the extent of what is thus received as a bribe, those who are promi-

nently engaged in the conduct of the schools, have not discovered to be, in its operation, an evil; nor has it been deemed inexpedient to consent to the elder girls receiving the same sum, in the shape of an encouragement, instead of an hurkaru being employed. For good conduct and regular attendance, tickets, varying in value from one pice to the smallest division of that sum, are distributed monthly, and annual rewards of sarees are given at the examination.

Earnestly is the day looked for when the growth of the church in India may provide qualified Christian teachers; it is not possible to conceive a greater trial to those who are occupied in the work, than being necessitated to convey the truth through the instrumentality of the heathen themselves; it is true that the conduct of Brahmins and others who follow the profession of teachers, is singularly discreet, so that there is far less open offence than might be anticipated; they do not unfrequently read the Scriptures as if they themselves were persuaded of their divine origin, but the pain of witnessing their obduracy of heart, although for years well conversant with the letter of the gospel, cannot be exceeded; and upon the children, the effect is naturally as great a hindrance as can be imagined. As soon as girls are of an age to think for themselves, they become special

objects of attention with the Superintendents, and it is to them that they chiefly look for the explanation of Scripture. In the Central School, with the exception of three Brahmins, the teachers are females, who have either as children, or at a riper age, been taught to read in the school. The proportion of Christian teachers to Heathen, thus employed in the institution, may be assumed to be one third of the whole number. In many of the Mission Schools for boys, it is not even in this proportion. The general inefficiency and habits of indolence and inattention of the teachers, so much lamented in the early stage of the work, continues unhappily to exist beyond any present means of remedy.

It will be observed, that there is no positive increase of attendance for several years past; those acquainted with the native character, will not be surprised when one of the greatest prejudices of the Hindoos is in question. The novelty no longer exists, and worldly gain, which may have been looked for, has not been found to result. In the steady maintenance of the number of children under instruction, it should be borne in mind, that a constant succession has enabled several thousand children to be in some degree acquainted with the nature of Christianity, and it is hoped that many have attained the means of further self-instruction.

The recital of what has come under observation, respecting the impression made upon the Heathen children, has its value in proportion to the difficulties with which they are obviously surrounded, and surely when girls of such tender age are enabled to make the confession which some of those here recited have done, forsaking "Father and mother, sisters and brethren," it will be admitted that the blessing of the Holy Spirit has not been altogether withheld: the kingdom of heaven coming without observation, faith prompts to the belief, that the searcher of hearts has been glorified in others that we know not of.

Immediately under the wall of the school house, are native huts of neat exterior, occupied by a small colony of native Christians, who either as teachers or servants find employment in the establishment; they are assembled morning and evening for family worship, attending the Mission Church at Mirzapore, where there is a congregation of about two hundred native Christians. Thus those who are engaged in the labor of the Central School, may be considered to be directly identified with the mission work.

CHAPTER XI.

DAY SCHOOLS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF CALCUTTA, AND IN THE UPPER PROVINCES—EFFORTS OF INDIVIDUALS—COLLECTION OF ORPHANS BY MRS. WILSON—STATE OF GENERAL DISTRESS—EFFORTS TO RESCUE—DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED—SICKNESS OF THE CHILDREN—ANECDOTES OF THE ORPHANS.

IN immediate connection with the Ladies Society, and on the same plan as the Central School, in Calcutta and its neighbourhood, are the following schools :—

Mirzapore, under Mrs. Sandys . . .	50 girls.
Circular road Association, chiefly in-	
tended for Mussulmans	90 „
Howrah, under Mrs. Hampton . . .	90 „
Culna, under Mrs. Alexander . . .	80 „
Kishnugger, Nuddea, Burdwan, and Alipore,	
are closed, no efficient superintendence being	
available.	

On the Mission premises, at Burdwan, Mrs. Weitbrecht assembles forty heathen girls for morning instruction, with her Orphan children.

There are local associations in correspondence with the Society,

At Benares, under Mrs. Smith, . . 68 girls.

At Allahabad, under Mrs. Hepworth 33 „

Thus about eight hundred heathen children are receiving Christian instruction, upon the principles already detailed.

The Serampore Mission which has from the first zealously advocated the cause of the female population of India, maintains a school for one hundred heathen girls. The Rev. W. H. Pearce, of the Baptist Mission, was early occupied with this branch of the work, and missionaries of other denominations have collected children; they have all had more urgent demands upon them from their converts, the translation of the Scriptures, and the settlement of the different congregations: and some have candidly confessed, that the discouragements attending the work, are sufficient to induce their discontinuance. The importance, therefore, of an effort, distinct from that of general missions, for this cause, is the more obvious.

The same objects carried on by individual residents, is noticed separately, to awaken the attention of Christians in India; who in connexion with their domestic establishments, have many native children residing in or near their own compounds. A teacher, at a salary not exceeding four rupees

a month, commencing with however few, might at a very small additional expence, form a respectable class from the neighbourhood.

The Howrah School which has for several years progressed in the most satisfactory manner, attained to its present standing by such a benevolent efforts ; and other instances of encouragement might be cited, which beginning even with one child, have opened the way to results, not uninfluential.

The visiting of females of the higher caste, has been shown to be, to a certain extent, feasible ; and for accomplishments unassociated with Christian influence, the way of access may be said to open daily ; but it is confessedly the work of faith to which allusion is here made : the qualification of tried experience with a demeanour commanding respect, has been already mentioned ; should any such Christian ladies be directed to this branch of the work in India, they will meet with the warmest welcome from every one occupied with the general cause of native female education.

The gathering of Orphans from the heathen, although only of comparatively recent date, may now be considered as the mission work connected with females, most generally attractive. It has been in some degree generated by the acquaintance with the poor heathen, through the medium of day-schools. But at a period, when in the ex-

tension of the native church, a suitable female association for the young native converts, was viewed as the subject of great difficulty: it has pleased the Lord that the awful judgments of famine, and inundations, should in a very remarkable manner minister to the collection of children under Christian influence; and where they have been sobrought together, to provide means for their support and instruction; many females thus cared for are already married to catechists, and the progress in this field of labor, now to be detailed, will be accepted as the cause of much thanksgiving. As an indirect benefit, operating upon the whole mission work, it is to be observed, that this charity brings under one roof, children born of different castes, from the upper and lower provinces, speaking different languages, whose kindred would never in any other way, have had intercourse; and teaches them to live in unity and to love one another. This mingled intercourse will establish in their minds, the inconsistency of that great national barrier to all improvement, *caste*; so that on going forth into the world, in the spirit of true conversion or otherwise, they may tell at least of this happy experience.

Mrs. Wilson from the commencement of her labors, always desired to collect native orphans, either Hindoo or Mahomedan, to train up as her

Christian children, who might become useful teachers in the day-schools. The way however was not, at that period, open for this branch of the work ; and at the expiration of ten years, she had only been able to bring under the roof of the Central school, twenty girls, some of whom were the fruit of her labors in the day-school, others as destitute children, and some were sent by friends. They were received with the fullest sense of the responsibility attaching to the adoption of a child for the Lord's sake ; and for their support, a separate fund was raised by Mrs. Wilson.

These children were accommodated in the out-buildings of the Central School, clothed and nurtured in the simplest native habits, and were always kept under the immediate eye of her, whom they were taught to regard as a parent ; they attended the Day School with the heathen children, their instruction in the Holy Scriptures being always made the prominent object ; the employments of the afternoon, were the English language and needle-work. Such girls of good character would, according to the habits of Christian converts, marry at the age of fifteen ; it was not very long before five of Mrs. Wilson's first Orphan children were thus disposed of, two to Catechists, and three to servants of the Central School. A gratifying proof of attachment to their kind bene-

factress, was evinced by a poor girl in the last stage of consumption, who requested that she might be carried back to Mrs. Wilson, to end her days under her maternal care, her conversation had been blameless, and short as was her career, it was useful; her death was one of great peace.

The visitations to which we have alluded, marked the years of 1832, 1833, as peculiarly disastrous. The greater part of Lower Bengal was inundated, and the crops destroyed; thousands were swept away, and whole districts depopulated by want and disease. The time for exertion was at hand. Mrs. Wilson had no mistrust as to the needful support being provided, and in a general appeal to the Christian public, made known her readiness to receive one hundred Orphans. Confidential persons, under the direction of a Catechist, were dispatched to the most distressed districts south of Calcutta, with food and clothing, to rescue the unfortunate; a service of no small danger, for they were all more or less attacked by the fever arising from the state of the country. Many children were saved, but in such a degree of exhaustion, that comparatively few were brought home. The boats were exposed to great peril, and one was totally lost, when a poor widow with two little girls were drowned, a quantity of cloth and rice destined for the poor sufferers, formed part of the lading. The Rev.

T. Sandys, the resident Church Missionary at Mirzapore, received the boys, and such was the state of disease and destitution in which the women and children were brought to the institution, that in the opening, it was more resembling an hospital than the well-ordered asylum for education, &c. which it was shortly destined to become. It must not however be supposed that even such a work as this was to meet with the ready countenance of the people, however distressed; there were bad characters making an open traffic with female children, and where no money was given, but the simple motive of charity avowed, there were difficulties to be encountered, from natives of the district vested with any authority. Events were however mercifully overruled, and great relief was effected, establishing an example, which in the north-western provinces during the late famine, has been eminently blessed to the relief of the poor, and the increase of Orphan Asylums. Although unwilling to shock the feelings of our readers by an attempt to give a minute description of the pictures of misery which these poor children presented, it is essential to explain that, none but such as were really considered to be perishing, were taken in.

The effects of starvation were not of short duration; appetite had become a disease, and

for months the poor children crawled about in a distressing state. The number of deaths was considerable, and the improbability of these poor sufferers being ever restored to health, seemed to bid defiance to unwearied medical aid and watchful care: indeed attractive as the institution has since become, it is to nurture the utterly helpless, that those who embark in this work must be prepared. In October 1833, there were twenty-six orphans, eight fatherless children, and twelve widows in the institution.

The following year the disastrous state of the upper provinces furnished a considerable addition to Mrs. Wilson's charge. Forty-two girls were sent from Allahabad, and of that number thirty-nine little delicate creatures were received in safety: this year the establishment was severely tried with measles, hooping-cough, fever, and other disorders, brought in by the different children, and spreading through the little community: sixteen of the children from the upper provinces died under one or other of these disorders. The favourable effect of Christian discipline was soon visible in the establishment; and that fruits of early grace were not altogether wanting, will be acknowledged when a few sketches are given of children, who for a short period, had enjoyed the benefit of instruction.

It was in 1827 that a poor little Mahomedan girl about five years old, was pointed out to Mrs. Wilson in one of the small schools, by the teachers, as a little creature suffering hunger almost to starvation, and pining under an aged father's cruelty, who, having nothing to give her, beat her whenever she asked him for food. Mrs. Wilson ordered a pice to be given to her daily, and sending for the father, begged him to give the child to her care, offering him support also; this he twice refused, saying 'the girl would lose caste, and become a Christian.' Shortly after, however, he sent to say, 'he should soon die, and that he wished to make over the child by a writing to Mrs. Wilson, in order that when he was gone, she might claim her from the hands of an unkind brother.' A native Christian was instantly sent with pen and paper in his hand, but the poor old man had just expired when the person reached his dwelling; the son was on the spot, and acknowledged that the father's last words were, to request that the child should be taken to the house of the lady; the poor little girl was standing by the corpse, eating a piece of biscuit, which fell from the father's hand as he expired: ten days after this touching scene, the school teacher brought the child to Mrs. Wilson; the brother however gave much trouble by endeavouring to get her

back. The little girl was baptised by the name of Anna; she is tall and thin, and of a very interesting countenance. Having been three years in the institution, she, with an elder orphan, accompanied Mrs. Wilson to the upper provinces; they were in the habit of reading Bowley's Hindoostanee Testament, so that at the halting places, they could both teach and read to the women and girls, who came around the travellers.

'Dear little Anna was of great use,' says Mrs. W. 'as the villagers, to whom we wished to give Tracts, were too timid to wait our approach, but would always admit the child among them, or we sent her forward, and by the time we reached the spot, she was engaged perhaps on tiptoe, assisting a poor man to read the tract; if they were reluctant to take them, she would encourage them to do so with 'take it, brother, take it, it is God's book, it will teach you about Jesus Christ.' One morning, Anna was seated outside the boat, when a Brahmin came to the Ganges with some little flowers in his hand, when this conversation took place between him and the child.

ANNA. 'Brahmin, why do you do that?'

BRAHMIN. 'I am worshipping God.'

ANNA. 'O then, you do not do it right; you should *pray* to him.'

BRAHMIN. 'Child, I am praying to him.'

ANNA. 'If you pray to God for his Holy Spirit, then you will be a Christian.'

BRAHMIN. 'I am a holy person, and this is God's command.'

ANNA. 'Brahmin, you make a mistake; God gave ten holy commandments, that which you are doing is not one of them.'

The Brahmin then rose, smiled upon her, and went away.—Anna returned to the institution, and was for some time a valuable assistant in the instruction of the younger orphans: she is married to a catechist of the Church Missionary Society, and has two children; both she and her husband have eminently enjoyed the regard of the missionaries with whom they have been placed.

An interesting Brahminee girl, about thirteen years of age, died after five months sojourn with Mrs. Wilson. There is good evidence that the instruction she received, was blessed to the true conversion of her soul; and it was at her own earnest request that she was baptised. She suffered very severely from spleen, but with great patience, only now and then remarking that, 'as she was so much wishing to go to Jesus, and was in such great pain, she wondered the great God did not call her away sooner.'

Miss Ward, who had charge of the Central School during Mrs. Wilson's absence in 1830, ab-

sented herself one morning from family worship, in consequence of severe illness; it excited alarm amongst the children, some of them hastened to her room to inquire, if any thing was the matter? Miss W. said 'she was very ill, and unable to rise.' A dear child's eyes (Eliza) filled with tears immediately; and dropping on her knees, with uplifted hands and loud voice, implored the Father of all good to restore her friend; having thus given vent to her feelings, she rose from her knees, and tenderly asked, what she could bring her?

Mary Anne, who, by reading the scriptures in the day school, was early convinced of the sin of idol worship, endured much persecution from her family; when eventually an inmate of the Christian Institution, she acted as head monitor in the Central School: becoming delicate in health, Mrs. Wilson took her with her on her excursion to the Upper Provinces. On leaving Calcutta, she, with other converts, was intreated to allow no day to pass without endeavouring to direct some poor heathen to the Saviour of sinners, and it is believed that she took every opportunity scrupulously to fulfil this injunction, speaking to every one she met with, who came to the house. When they arrived at Patna, she took her seat near the boundary wall, to speak with the poor

women as they passed to and fro to the river ; one poor person was brought to the knowledge of the truth chiefly through her instrumentality. Mary Anne took the small-pox, and although confined to her bed during the day, she rallied of an evening, and never missed taking her seat at the wall. One day, however, she was too weak to leave her room, but a person coming in, to whom she had been accustomed to speak, she raised herself up with her wonted energy. Mrs. Wilson being present, saw that the effort was painful, and requested her to keep quiet, promising to converse with the woman herself ; the poor girl fell back on her bed, and remained silent sometime, when raising herself again and bursting into tears, with a look of real distress, she entreated to be allowed to speak *herself*, urging that, ‘ as she could not go out, she should have passed one *whole* day without directing a heathen sinner to the Saviour.’—On her return to Calcutta, she was again employed as monitor in the Central School.—At that time Mrs. Wilson said often, ‘ This young person’s life from her baptism to the present period, has been one of the most blameless I have ever known, she is humble, devout, and amiable.’—She married a catechist of the Baptist persuasion, and has a family ; they continue to adorn their profession, and are much esteemed.

In April 1836, the number of children in the institution was 108.—To the reflective Christian a more interesting sight can scarcely be conceived, than these girls walking in a body to the Mirzapore Mission Chapel, where they have all been baptized.

CHAPTER XII.

A SEPARATE INSTITUTION FOR THE ORPHANS BECOMES NECESSARY—CHOICE OF ITS LOCALITY—ERECTION OF THE ORPHAN REFUGE AT AGRAPARAH—REMOVAL OF THE CHILDREN—COURSE OF DISCIPLINE AND INSTRUCTION—MISSIONARY SETTLEMENT CONTEMPLATED AT AGRAPARAH—MRS. WILSON'S CIRCULAR AND REMARKS ON ORPHAN ASYLUMS.

FOR several years it had been foreseen, that the spiritual welfare of the children called for a more distinct separation from the heathen, than could possibly be attained in the city of Calcutta, surrounded by a dense population. It is indeed a matter of wonder, that the Central School premises, solely intended for the conduct of the day school, should ever have been made to accommodate such an important additional establishment, but what will not faith with patient perseverance accomplish? When Mrs. Wilson first made the appeal for the collection of orphans, expressing her readiness to receive one hundred girls, the commerce of India was paralysed to an extent which reduced many thousands from affluence, to the necessity of resuming their habits of industry:



ORPHAN REFUGE.

London. Published, 1839, by Seeley & Burnside, Fleet St.



and the work was, by many well-disposed people, considered to be impracticable and ill timed. The Lord has however never failed to send the needful succour; the daily bread has always been provided, but at times none has been suffered to remain over.

The work of thus bringing the perishing little ones to the Lord, that he may bless them, could not be otherwise viewed by his handmaid, than as one of continued growth, and which in spite of every obstacle, must prosper. A ready mind was granted with the devoted heart, and no sooner was the first arduous attendance upon the number of sick and helpless children over, than with a silent resolution which none but the strength of the Holy Spirit could bestow, it was purposed to build an Orphan Refuge. In the choice of locality, the chief object of consideration with Mrs. Wilson, was such a proximity to her original work, as might enable her to continue an efficient connexion with both establishments; for viewing the day-schools as an unlimited sphere of missionary labor to the poor heathen females, it would have been quite contrary to the spirit of patient perseverance, with which she has been so eminently gifted, had she consented to abandon them. Again the health of the children, and an easy access to the Refuge, rendered it expedient to look to the banks of the river. In a very retired position,

although within a short distance of thickly inhabited villages, stood an old building, well inclosed with substantial brick walls, bordering on the river ; it had been a government silk factory, and was at this period to be peremptorily sold. There was no land adjoining the premises for sale, which was a serious objection, but in all other respects the place was most suitable ; and in that dependence which makes every labor light, Mrs. Wilson became the purchaser, for a very small sum. A kind assistant was found for her in one of the first builders in Calcutta, who offered gratuitously to give his attention to the progress of the work. The plan was adapted for the accommodation of one hundred and fifty children, and in faith that the Lord would put it into the hearts of his people to give of their abundance, the work commenced. Mrs. Wilson's own practical experience went far to ensure every economy, whilst it provided that each branch should be as durable as possible. Her appeal to the charity of the public was met by such kind contributions, as secured the payment of disbursements, as they were called for ; but as at the commencement of her labors, the income was strikingly apportioned to the daily necessities.

Towards the close of the year 1836, the building was completed ; and it may be safely said,

to be raised on that sure foundation, which will be owned by the Lord, as a house of his building, where the labor cannot be in vain, and of which the example it is trusted, will not be suffered to be so either. The day at length arrived, when Mrs. Wilson's faith was to be rewarded, by being permitted to take possession of the Orphan Refuge at Agraparah, with the children she had nurtured and cared for. Six years residence at the central school associated with the recollections of great mercies and severe trials, did not allow the moment so long desired, and now so full of accomplished hope, to be one of unmixed feeling: the party being so numerous, and the tide uncertain, it was determined to take the Barrackpore road leading from the Central School; and at four o'clock in the afternoon, of the 21st of October, 1836, the children were arranged in twelve keranchies, or native covered carriages, of very rude construction on four wheels; the procession was led by Mrs. Wilson and a friend, in a similar conveyance, and closed by one of her assistants in a palanquin carriage. The children at first seemed a little sorrowful at parting from their first home, but soon recovering their spirits, they became very talkative and excited about their expected dwelling, which they had not yet seen; sleep overpowering the boisterous, the rest occupied

themselves by singing hymns, till at seven o'clock they approached the house, where they were soon lodged in comfort and peace for the night. Allusion has been made to the interesting sight these orphan children presented, prior to their removal; although we would studiously desire to avoid the indulgence of feeling which the pleasing exterior may excite, in any matter so directly associated with the salvation of souls, we cannot but notice the happy effect, which without any possible foresight or arrangement, is produced by so great a variety of character and ages being brought, by the same influence, as it were into one body. Although the elder girls marry at about fourteen, there are usually a sufficient number in the institution, both to direct and to take charge of the younger; and of the very young ones, there are as many as serve well to maintain the progression of improvement, without their number being such, as to render an extra establishment necessary. A stranger may not be struck by the diversity of feature and expression, but those who are well acquainted with India, are much interested in tracing the features which characterize the different districts, from whence these children are collected. Although when the children are first received, they often appear terrified and impatient of the necessary restraint, it is surprising to see in how

short a time their affections are won, and how quickly they become identified with their new home and companions.

The number of orphans with which Mrs. Wilson took possession of the Refuge was 96, it has since been increased to 130. The entrance-room from the verandah is where they now assemble for worship,—they are seated on the floor in rows of twenty, the younger forming the front at the feet of Mrs. Wilson, and the elder girls the back ground, behind them are the native Christian families connected with the institution. The service commences with a hymn, and the children may be said now to have attained to a very competent exercise of Psalmody; a portion of scripture is usually then read, and sometimes expounded in the way of easy questions and applications. Some of the elder girls have given happy evidence of their comprehension of the efficacy of prayer, withdrawing in small bodies for the exercise of that privilege, and thereby affording Mrs. Wilson the occasion to indulge her desire of leading them, at an early age, to minister of their blessings to others. Mrs. Wilson usually conducts the worship herself, assisted by one or other of the elder girls. An experienced catechist is attached to the institution, who takes the Sabbath duties. The Rev. T. Sandys, their former pastor, continues an affec-

tionate charge, visiting Agraparah monthly, more particularly for the administration of the sacrament. Twenty-two of the Orphans have recently been confirmed by the Lord Bishop. At the early age of these children, it is not wise to speak of their piety, but it may be fearlessly said, that the tone pervading the institution, is increasingly the subject of encouragement. The long school-room, is formed by an inclosed verandah, connecting the old and new building, it presents a remarkably happy scene of industry: nothing can be prettier than the groups of children seated around their teachers or monitors on the matted floor. Of the detail of their occupations, which vary from the Bengali alphabet, to reading of the Testament in English, with useful work, we are able to give Mrs. Wilson's own report.

MORNING.—After worship, the 130 girls are seated in the large school-room, and in classes, according to their attainments, read the Scriptures in English and Bengali, or are engaged in the rudiments of both languages.

AFTERNOON.—The girls are distributed for useful work: South room, Miss Williams, 20 girls, worsted work and leather balls. Church room, Miss Andrews, 10 girls, knitting; 10 embroidery; 10 basket-making. School room, Miss Ewald,

30 girls, plain needle work ; 10 making men's clothes, and reading the Scriptures in Bengali. The little children, 40, learn the alphabet, &c.

Of fancy work made by the children, and on sale for the benefit of the institution, the following are enumerated : ' Tasee,' a border on the frock, skirt, sleeves, &c. in lamb's wool of different colours. Jaconet muslin, with green runners, leaves, and pink rose buds. Bags, of black satin, with floss silk, &c.

It may be said that these children are never left alone, the three assistants who enjoy Mrs. Wilson's entire confidence, relieving each other in the routine of responsibility. A native medical man resides on the premises, the sick however become specially the objects of Mrs. Wilson's spiritual charge. One of the great difficulties with missionaries, has been to raise the mind and feelings, without destroying such native habits, as are simple and unobjectionable in the young convert ; the orphans are pleasing examples of this happy combination. They know a little of English, but the acquisition is never treated as a mere vain accomplishment. They bathe daily before their first meal, going in divisions of twenty to the river immediately in front of the building, the bank being there protected by an inclosure. The biographical sketches already given, serve to shew.

that these children want neither the ability or the power of affection ; instances of peculiar talent, whether attributable to the nature of their circumstances or not, have however, to the present time, not been discovered. Their attainment in worsted work is really extraordinary, and is rendered an important means of support to the establishment. Some of them are now receiving instruction from natives of Dacca, in the art of embroidery, and others have commenced on basket-work.

Hitherto the education of these orphans has not been found to unfit them for settling amongst the poor of their native villages ; and a native Christian with satisfactory certificates from his pastor or employer, would not, on account of poverty, be refused by Mrs. Wilson as a candidate for one of her girls, if earning sufficient for their maintenance : speaking on this subject in one of her reports, she thus writes : ‘ Within three years, twenty-eight orphans have married away, of course they marry only to Christians, who bring with them a good character from their ministers. These young couples are poor as to this world’s riches, but if God the Holy Spirit convert their hearts, they may be rich in faith and heirs of eternal glory ; they may be blessed themselves, and made a blessing to others. For these highest,

best results, we labor, watch, and pray continually.'

In further token of the success of Mrs. Wilson's system, we cannot but mention Gunga, a deaf and dumb girl, who, under peculiar circumstances, was admitted to the benefit of the institution, and has been an inmate for several years. Her very intelligent countenance has acquired a happy expression, although her natural temper is strong and obstinate, and exceedingly sensitive; she is very cheerful, and a great favourite with her playmates; they have taught her to converse with her fingers; and she seems not merely to watch intelligently every thing that is passing, but really to have a very clear apprehension of persons and things, retaining a perfect recognition of individuals, and manifesting great pleasure at the approach of those who are kind to her. At worship she takes her place with the others, and is certainly not devoid of some degree of spiritual understanding. In worsted work she particularly excels, and several pieces done by her, have been sent to England.

Although the buildings within the walls are complete, further arrangements are in progress for the settlement of a missionary and family on the spot, the field for labor among both the heathen and Mahomedans being most important:

it is purposed that the missionary shall take the pastoral charge of the Orphan Refuge.

The want of land with the first purchase, was mentioned as a serious objection, and with the national prejudice against parting with the land occupied by their forefathers, the difficulty seemed to be a positive barrier to the efficiency of the Establishment. The first attempts to kind neighbourly approach, were met by a sullen suspicious temper : but here again the rough places have been made plain, the hearts of the people have relented, and immediately adjoining the premises, sufficient land has been obtained on fair terms, for a chapel and burying ground, a school and mission house : The latter is already completed, and the first brick of a school for three hundred Native Boys, was laid in February by the Lord Bishop. We cannot but observe, that it is a distinguishing feature in Mrs. Wilson's labors, that all her arrangements are made, as preparatory for the day when she may be removed, and doubtless be made partaker of the faithful servants' reward, entering into the joy of her Lord.

CIRCULAR.

‘ Nearly two years have passed since Mrs. Wilson entered the Orphan Refuge, and she records with

grateful feelings that the time has been spent happily, and, she trusts, usefully by the children.

‘ The number has gradually increased to one hundred and thirty. During the last nine months, no death has occurred, and within the last year, the needle-work done by the girls has been valued at two thousand rupees.

‘ The children now in the institution are from three to fourteen years of age, they are nearly all in good health, and progressing steadily. They are admitted from three to eleven or twelve years old, and remain till they marry, and Mrs. W. wishes it to be generally known, that she is prepared to receive as many destitute Native Orphan Girls as may be sent her requiring a home.

‘ The institution is situated on the banks of the River Hooghly, nine miles north of Calcutta, and six south of Barrackpore, and is always open to inspection, Sundays excepted.

‘ The children have morning and evening worship in the Bengali language, and the school occupies six hours a day. Those who come in young, learn Bengali and English, with plain and fancy needle work, (the latter is sold to assist the funds), otherwise only Bengali and plain needle work. The girls are also made useful in the institution : the elder ones bring in all the water required, alternately clean the house, chiefly cook their own

food, wait on the sick, and take care of the little ones. Their food and clothing are according to their native habits, which are suitable and economical. Mrs. W. is assisted by three conscientious and valuable young friends, for whose time and talents she has much reason to be thankful, and she has the comfort of knowing that, whether present or absent, the labors proceed with equal regularity and order.

‘ Within four years twenty-eight orphans have married away. Of course they marry only to Christians, who bring with them a good character from their ministers. These young couples are poor as to this world’s riches, but if God the Holy Spirit convert their hearts, they may be rich in faith and heirs of eternal glory: they may be blessed themselves, and may be made a blessing to others. For these highest, best results, we labor, watch, and pray continually!’

‘ Mrs. W. entered the Refuge, October 21, 1836.

With Orphans	.	.	96	Now in the Refuge	.	.	130
Received since	.	.	59	Deaths	.	.	11
				Marriages	.	.	14
			<hr/>				<hr/>
Total			155			Total	155
			<hr/>				<hr/>

‘ It is sometimes asked, and it is a most important and interesting question,—How many of these orphans are *real* Christians? The reply however

must be, We do not know. At all times we rejoice with trembling: we have many pleasing indications; but this is the day of training, and they are under restraints, also greatly sheltered from temptations. But when they leave these walls, their day of trial will begin, poor children! Let us pray that they may be found faithful *then*.

‘ Mrs. W. hopes a missionary couple will be sent from England for this neighbourhood. The gentleman will take the pastoral charge of the refuge: a house is building for their reception.

‘ Two Day Schools were attempted two years ago for boys and girls near the house, but both failed. An effort has since been made half a mile off, on the Barrackpore road, where about fifty boys read the Gospels, &c. in Bengali, and commit to memory, mornings, and write, afternoons—and at length, in a small mat school-room near, *nine* little girls assembled once a day for reading with a native Christian mistress. Two Christian teachers read and speak daily with the native men, and two elderly widows go among the women every afternoon for the same purpose.

‘ The monthly expenditure for the refuge is about four hundred rupees; for the Day Schools and readers; nearly twenty-five; and two thousand rupees are required to finish the mission-house, out-offices, river and other boundaries.

‘ As Mrs. W. resides too far from town to solicit monthly subscriptions, and many annual subscribers having left the country, she begs the favour of her Christian friends to pass on a circular to any new residents, in the hope they may feel disposed to assist the object in this way.

‘ Contributions will be received by Messrs. Turner, Stopford, and Co. Calcutta ; also by Mrs. Wilson, and very gratefully acknowledged.

Orphan Refuge, near Calcutta,

September 26, 1838.

‘ Mrs. Wilson with much respect, begs to make a few remarks in reference to Native Male and Female Orphan Asylums in the upper provinces. Mrs. W. has the comfort of knowing that various efforts have been made during the late period of fearful distress among the natives of this country, in the north-western districts.

‘ Many destitute starving orphans have been brought under Christian care and teaching, and although the numbers rescued are few in comparison of those who must have perished, yet a something has been done for which we would be thankful, and let us hope that Christians will become increasingly anxious to save these poor little ones from the manifold miseries of Pagan superstitions.

‘ To those who are really watching for opportunities of usefulness, and proving by their daily walk that they count it indeed their meat and drink to do their Master’s will, and behold a mother and a brother in every redeemed soul, to such we need not fear to say—May we not hope to see a Male and Female Native Orphan Asylum established at every large station in India ?

‘ The Orphans must have truly pious persons to take care of them; but not missionaries: these gentlemen have to learn the local languages, and preach to adults. They can be their ministers only. Too much is left to missionaries: every Christian family should be a missionary family, especially in a heathen land. If ever this dark part of the world be blessed with gospel light through creature instrumentality, how different must become the spirit of giving and doing !

‘ Suitable teachers may be invited from England : respectable couples to take the entire internal charge of both Boys’ and Girls’ Asylums. The Hon. and Rev. B. Noel is patron of the London Ladies’ Society for Native Female Education in the east, and this gentleman may see it desirable to add a Gentleman’s Committee, for the purpose of sending out such teachers perhaps hereafter. In all Orphan houses, of course there will be room for the master and mistress, so that with a house,

and the orphans doing the work of servants, one hundred and fifty rupees a month would be a suitable salary for the couple, thus one hundred for the Husband's Boys' School, and fifty the Wife's for the Girl's. If this sum could be sent from Europe for two years, it might be hoped by that time an asylum would be able greatly to assist in its own support. The boys could learn shoe-making and other trades. The girls could learn every kind of needle-work; if ladies would have regular visiting days to teach them: they might make children's dresses, &c. for on board ship, and any other useful things, which might be sold quarterly.

‘ One hundred children could be fed and clothed for two hundred rupees a month, and in a very few years many would be able to go forth, with the blessing of God, as teachers of their ignorant neighbours, and in other ways become useful as servants, and respectable as Christian families.

‘ The Rev. Mr. Wybrow is about to visit the upper provinces, and he will be happy to meet the residents of the various stations, and to give every assistance in his power to promote the establishment of regular Orphan Schools, &c. by which means these cases of misery will be met as they occur, which is almost periodically. The first outlay in such a work must be considerable, but after the necessary buildings have been erected,

the monthly sum will be moderate, and each friend doing and giving for Jesu's sake, there will be nothing lacking but prayer, that God the Father may own and bless the efforts in the conversion of many souls.

“Ye must be born again.” ’

CHAPTER XIII.

ORPHAN ASYLUMS AT BURDWAN—CAWNPORE—BENARES—GOR-
RUCKPORE—ALLAHABAD—FUTTEHPORE ASYLUM AND REPORT—
IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATING THE CHILDREN OF NATIVE CON-
VERTS—CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS AT MIRZAPORE—SEEDPORE
AND CALCUTTA.

THE extent of the necessities of India when contemplated in any other than the spirit of faith, is totally overwhelming; placing the charitable efforts now in operation in a light so truly diminutive, that except it were felt that in the divine counsels a very different result awaits us than man can foresee, but few would be able to make any stand against the weight of discouragement.

The most laborious servant in the vineyard scarcely acquires a knowledge of the work he is called to, before his course terminates: if therefore in any one sphere, more than another, Christians should be diligent to do good whilst they have opportunity, it is in India. As if propelled by such a conviction, scarcely is the happy completion of the Refuge accomplished, than a fresh zeal is manifested for the spread of the system.

The address which closes our last chapter leaves but little room for further remark, and it is our earnest desire that it may be made instrumental in furthering the Lord's kingdom. Of the other asylums for orphans already in existence, we have to mention, as the first in date, a small collection of thirty-five orphan girls under the care of Mrs. Weitbrecht, wife of the resident Church Missionary at Burdwan, accommodated in a building arranged for the purpose on the mission compound: in addition to Mrs. W's. maternal care, the children have the advantage of very efficient superintendence from a lady, who left England expressly devoted to the work. They are taught Bengali and English, writing and arithmetic, with plain needle work and worsted work; their own industry being thus made to contribute to their support. They read fluently, and have attained a very satisfactory acquaintance with the Scriptures. The girls are kept in the continued exercise of industry, part of the day they are occupied in household work and spinning, and Mrs. Weitbrecht has been very successful in training some of them as servants, selecting them by turn for daily occupations in her own family. Their food and dress are provided according to native habits. With a view to the encouragement of private devotion, the elder girls have been furnished with a separate sleeping

apartment, and a small wooden cot. It is not Mr. Weitbrecht's course to administer baptism to converts, young as these children may be, until there be some reason to infer that they entertain a due sense of the obligation ; some of the elder orphans we are thankful to say, have lately been admitted to the full privileges of church membership.

The little ones are now instructed upon the infant system, heathen day-scholars and some of the younger orphan boys assembling with them in the morning, for this purpose. The plan, although very fatiguing for the superintendent, at present promises well. Mrs. Weitbrecht, who is liberally aided by voluntary contributions, would be thankful for the opportunity to increase her numbers, their own district has not afforded any recent additions, and we are not aware of children having been lately sent to Burdwan from distant parts : as one of the oldest Mission Stations, it may be considered a very favourable position for such an Institution.

At Cawnpoor, a Native Female Orphan Asylum has been organized by the Diocesan Committee of the Incorporated Society for the propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the management being vested in local committees of gentlemen, and of ladies for visiting the Institution, from whom the head mistress receives her directions. The

system of admission is made in some degree dependent upon the contribution of the recommending party, and the plans of operation are altogether more restricted than Institutions generally are, when intended for the benefit of the destitute heathen. The number of girls in the asylum is sixty, they are instructed according to the discipline of the Church of England, and read in English and Hindoostanee. It is the habit of the Institution that the girls do all the housework themselves, and it is understood that they are allowed to quit the asylum as servants, when ladies engage for their board, lodging, and reasonable wages.

From Futtehpoor, we have the following interesting Circular, dated February, 1838. The report of the male department as showing the very useful nature of the arrangements will not be considered out of place. The history of this Institution furnishes a remarkable instance of what private individuals may, by divine grace, effect within a short period.

CIRCULAR.

‘ In consequence of the very great distress which now prevails through these Provinces, a great number of orphan children of both sexes have come into our hands, whom it is our intention to bring

up and educate in the Christian religion, we have therefore opened an Asylum for the accommodation of fifty male and fifty female orphans. The latter will live in our own Bungalow, and be constantly under our own immediate eye and care. Their instruction in English, Hindoostanee, and useful needle work, &c. will be superintended by Mrs. Madden, assisted by a native Christian school mistress of excellent character. Walls are at present being raised so as entirely to seclude the girls, who have a spacious play ground within their enclosures. Our native Christian schoolmaster, who has for years been diligently engaged in a day school at this Station, has undertaken the charge of the boys, and from his faithful conduct hitherto, there is every reason to believe that, under the Divine blessing, our Institution will prosper. The boys will, as far as circumstances and funds admit, be brought up to useful trades, and those who appear best adapted will be educated as teachers.

‘ The plan pursued at present at Mrs. Wilson’s Female Orphan Refuge, Calcutta, will be followed in the female department. Our number is at present exceeded ; but as we feel we could not do justice to more than one hundred, we shall send the surplus children to other Institutions : our monthly expenditure, including salaries of a

Christian school master, mistress, Lalla, food, clothing, &c. is 250 rs. Besides which we have laid out a considerable sum on buildings absolutely necessary. To meet so large a monthly expenditure, we must look beyond our immediate circle, and therefore appeal to your Christian benevolence to aid our undertaking by becoming a subscriber. The Institution will always be open to the inspection of the public, and half yearly reports will be forwarded to each subscriber, giving a detailed account of the state, funds, expenditure, &c. of the Institution.'

'The above Circular was distributed to a few friends during the prevalence of the late famine, and agreeable to the resolution contained therein, the Superintendants, now that six months have elapsed, proceed to give a detailed account of what has been done during that time, and the present state of the Institution, its funds, &c. First, they desire to return thanks to Almighty God for enabling them to carry on a work which they trust will be for the furtherance of his kingdom in this heathen land; and also for raising ample funds supplied by a liberal public. The orphans were principally collected by Baboo Gopeenauth Nundi, (the school master), six months since, during the extreme distress with which these provinces were visited; crossing the Jumna he procured the

greater number of those at present in the Institution, (together with several at different times sent to the Missionaries at Benares;) from Kulpee and its neighbourhood, the remainder were sent by Captain Wheler of Futtehgurh. The plans laid down in the above circular have been fully carried into effect, and a circumstantial statement of both departments will now be given.'

'FEMALE DEPARTMENT.—At the time when the circular was distributed, there were fifty girls in the school, that number is now reduced to forty-two, seven having died from the effects of the famine, and one having run away—there are still three or four poor girls whose recovery from their previously suffered hardship is very doubtful: the remainder are strong, healthy, and cheerful. The girls all rise at gun fire: some are employed in grinding wheat into ata (for the consumption of both departments :) some in washing the clothes of all; others in cleaning the apartments, drawing water, spinning and cleaning cotton until eight o'clock, when they assemble for breakfast, after which they wash: at half-past nine they (and also the boys) assemble in the school room, when morning worship commences, namely, a hymn is sung, and a chapter in the New Testament (Rev. W. Bowley's Hindee version) is read, concluded by prayer in Hindee, all the children repeating the

Lord's prayer. At ten o'clock, school commences, and the day is passed as follows:—ten to eleven, "Sermon on the Mount" in English, and other portions of the New Testament—eleven to twelve needle work—twelve to one, New Testament in Hindee—one to two, recreation—two to three English New Testament—three to half-past four, needle work—half-past four, dinner. The time which elapses from dinner until dusk is passed in gardening, spinning, and other light work. At dusk the girls again study Hindee New Testament, and the excellent Catechism beginning "Kisne sub kooch ootpun khee" for one hour, after which both schools assemble for even prayers, and then retire. The girls, up to the 1st of August, have been partly under the care of the wife of the schoolmaster, on a salary of twenty rupees per month: she is now incapacitated by ill health from holding her situation. Enquiries are being made for a qualified mistress, and in the mean time the school will be conducted by monitors and the Hindee teacher, one of the superintendents being constantly present during school hours—in this way the girls will, it is hoped, attain a complete knowledge of reading and writing in their own language, as well as a thorough knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.'

'MALE DEPARTMENT.—At day-break the boys

all rise, and immediately proceed to their respective employments as follows:—five weave clothes of various kinds—four learn carpenter's work—two learn turning—seven are employed as Dhobees for all—five dig and plough in a piece of ground, in which the crops of the season are cultivated—two learn tailor's work—three learn pottery—three weave tapes of different kinds—four weave coarse canvass, (tat)—two rattan chair bottoms—two are employed as barbers—two as sweepers—two as water carriers—two in cleaning cotton—three in assisting the cook. These several employments are not permitted to interfere with the regular school hours. After morning prayer, the boys, accompanied by their school master, proceed to their own school room, and the day is passed as follows—from ten to half past eleven the first class are engaged in learning St. John's Gospel in Hindee—second class learn English spelling with the master, and the third class with a monitor of the first class—half-past eleven to one, the first class learn St. Matthew's Gospel in English—second class write English on slates, and third class Hindee Catechism—one to two, recreation—two to three, first class write English—second class read Hindee with the pundit, and third class read English with the school master—three to half-past four, first class learn arithmetic, second and third

classes write on slates. Dinner at half-past four, after which the boys again work at their different trades until dusk—a short period is allowed for recreation, when evening study from seven to eight commences, after which all assemble for prayers as in the morning, and then retire to rest. The male department is under the care of Baboo Gopeenath Nundi, who receives a salary of fifty rupees per month. On Sunday the children of both schools attend Divine Service (Hindoostanee) morning and evening, and also a Sundays school for an hour.'

'The superintendents beg to call the attention of the public to the following circumstances.'

'1st. That with the exception of a Nân Bai (or baker,) *no* servant is attached to the Institution, the children do every thing for themselves, and are thus entirely separated from Heathen and Mahomedan contamination. This servant is at present employed to ensure strict punctuality in the meals being ready at the appointed hour, but he will not be continued after such time as one or two of the elder boys have learned the mode of cooking in the native oven, by which wholesome and fermented cakes for one hundred, can be prepared in an almost incredibly short space of time. One of the greatest difficulties the superintendents have to contend with, is to preserve and enforce habits of undeviating order and punctuality; and

to teach the children to assign to every duty an exact time and place for its fulfilment. To assist this desirable object, a clock has been written for to England, which it is expected will be supplied by kind European friends.'

'2nd. That the children of both departments are constantly employed; the great object of the superintendents being to combine the paramount advantages of a Christian education, with the most industrious habits and attention to economy, and to take care that each child as it grows up, shall become acquainted with some useful occupation, which will render it independent in after life. Those children whose talents appear to be of a superior order, shall be selected, and special attention paid to their education, with a view to their becoming teachers hereafter.'

'3rd. A considerable portion of the last six months has been occupied in raising buildings, making enclosures, and other necessary works which require time and labour, so that, that attention which the superintendents wished to have devoted to the children was rendered impossible. On reviewing the progress which the children have hitherto made, their advancement in learning handicrafts, has surpassed the expectations formed; while, on the contrary, their progress in school has been exceedingly slow, independent of the uncul-

tivated state in which their minds were at the time of their admission into the asylum, it must be remembered that most of them were reduced to the most wretched state from the effects of famine ; this is still strongly depicted in many of their faces.'

'4th. It is the intention of the superintendents to retain charge of the orphans only so long as they can efficiently discharge the duties they have undertaken—but should it be found that they are, from any cause, unable to continue the superintendence, they will thankfully avail themselves of the numerous institutions open for the reception of native orphans.'

Mrs. Madden was induced to visit India with the express desire of benefiting the native female population. The circular was not long published, when she was taken so seriously ill, as to render it necessary for Mr. Madden to discontinue the establishment: and soon after this resolve, Mrs. Madden was removed to her better rest. The girls have been sent from Futtehpoore to an Orphan Asylum at Benares, under the care of Mrs. Smith, wife of the Church Missionary ; and the boys to the Rev. C. Leupolt, by this arrangement the institution for girls will now have about ninety children; it is yet in its infancy,

but it is intended that it shall be conducted on the principles of the Refuge at Agraparah. For some years past, christian missionaries have with all boldness preached the word in the streets of Benares, the stronghold of Hindooism,—and this gathering together of large bodies of native children by the adoption of Christians, about two hundred boys being under Mr. Leupolt's care, is a bright era, which the most sanguine minds were not prepared to contemplate.—No fewer than four hundred orphans have been collected at Agra during the late famine; with the number of each sex we are not yet acquainted, nor are the final arrangements as to their settlement completed.

At Allahabad a new orphan fund has been raised for girls, rescued during the time of distress; it has commenced with fifteen who are at present maintained under the care and teaching of the school-mistress of the heathen day school, their progress is mentioned as very slow, and some of them still require nursing care; further plans are yet the subject of deliberation.

The Gorruckpore mission, which has especially in contemplation, the embodying of converts into a community altogether distinct from the heathen, has a tract of land under cultivation, on which the Rev. M. Wilkinson has lately succeeded in building a church; it may therefore be considered to

have within itself peculiar advantages for maintaining an Asylum for orphans. Mrs. Wilkinson, assisted by a lady from England, has for some time made a commencement, and is desirous to promote the further extension of the work.

At Sharunpore and their several other stations, the American missionaries have commenced this branch of the work with zeal.

No fewer than four hundred orphans have been collected at Agra, during the late famine, with the number of each sex we are not yet acquainted: subscriptions to a considerable extent have already been collected for the Agra Orphan Institution, and the opportune arrival of Messrs. Schneider and Hoernle, of the Church Mission, with their wives, is calculated to insure all the necessary superintendence.

At Cuttack also, one of the Baptist missionaries, the Rev. Mr. Sutton has formed an orphan establishment: in the superintendence, Mrs. Sutton has lately been assisted by an English lady.

Although we mention the taking charge of the children of native converts last, as not directly affecting the heathen female population in their perishing condition, whose cause we have had prominently in view; it must not be supposed to be, in our apprehension the less important. We can scarcely conceive any exercise of love more imme-

diately affecting the welfare of the whole church, or which presents itself as forcibly, to be the legitimate occupation of those who are in any way associated with the ministry. In order fully to appreciate the importance of giving protection, and an education suited to the baptismal profession made for the children; it is necessary to have in remembrance, that Hindoos who receive the gospel are really outcasts,—from the moment they embrace the truth, their nearest akin hold them to be accursed, all their former associations are destroyed, and however pure their motives, their conversion to Christianity necessarily entails something approaching to dependance. He who is first called of God in a village must stand alone, and if others sufficient to form a body to which a minister can devote himself, are not speedily gathered, the abandonment of his dwelling and occupation is a natural consequence; to whom then does he reasonably look for the education of his children? Again, a church being formed, its growth and vigour, speaking after the manner of men, can scarcely be aided in any more obvious way. The native convert looks upon his pastor with high veneration; the act of committing his children to his care, will however establish that better relation of confidence and affection, and the child returning from time to time to the village, with

increased capability for every duty, will be made a blessing that the heathen must be ignorant of. The female children can at all times be more readily spared from the agricultural districts, they are wholly without other means of becoming enlightened, and again under the existing great need of pastoral aid, it is not an unimportant feature that this branch of the work very naturally devolves upon the missionary's wife or any other lady who will devote herself to it. The Baptists and the Independent London Mission, who have large flourishing congregations in the villages south of Calcutta, have from the very unhealthy nature of the district, found it impracticable for European missionaries to reside amongst their people; they have therefore directly identified these boarding schools with their missions, which afford to the benevolent the opportunity of giving to a native child the most desirable education; whilst at the same time, orphans are not excluded from a participation in the benefits of these institutions.—The most favourable example of this class of missionary labor is at Seedpoor,—a small village opposite to Fort William, and within a short distance from Bishop's College, conducted by Mrs. Pearce, the wife of the Rev. George Pearce, of the Baptist Mission. In the range of their own premises there is ample room

for the accommodation of a large family; the house, although unpretending, is spacious, and has a most agreeable aspect on the banks of the river, with good garden ground, being situated at the point most contiguous to the sphere of Mr. Pearce's labors, the villages on the Hoogley, south of Calcutta. There are forty girls, children of the Baptist Mission congregation, boarded, and in all respects cared for with the most discreet christian kindness; the system of instruction is simple and useful, bearing throughout a character purely missionary. The chief study of the children are the scriptures in Bengali, with which they may be said to be well acquainted. Writing, arithmetic, the elements of grammar, and geography, they are also taught, all in their native language. Needle-work, and household-work, form part of their occupations. Their habits with respect to food and dress are retained, but as the opportunity has offered, in their arrangements for sleeping, a special regard has been had to the encouragement of prayer in secret, and the cultivation of a sense of modesty and decorum, by erecting a range of matted buildings of very neat exterior, divided into separate compartments, with a cot for each girl. The family worship in this household is open to native converts in the neighbourhood, and the number

seated round the large room, presents a most interesting object. The psalmody of the children has been much cultivated, and is more distinct and powerful than in any other institution with which we are acquainted. The parents are encouraged to a free communication with the mission-house; the children likewise have stated seasons to visit their homes, so that with all their acquirements, they are not suffered to become estranged from their own kindred. Mrs. Pearce has had the pleasure of perceiving indications of real piety in some of the girls, and of great improvement in the whole number.

Upon much the same principle, Mrs. Campbell, wife of the Rev. C. Campbell, of the London Mission, receives as boarders into their house in the Circular Road, Calcutta: about twenty-five girls, some of whom are orphans. They attend the Bengali service at the Union Chapel on a Sunday afternoon.

On the Mirzapore Mission compound, the gradually increasing wants of the converts have been met by an institution organized by Mrs. Sandys, which embraces boarders, orphans, (seventeen) and day-scholars, children of resident native Christians. She pursues as far as circumstances permit, the same plans as Mrs. Wilson.

Miss Bird's name will probably be remembered

by many in England, interested in the progress of Christianity amongst the natives of India. She was actively engaged for some years in endeavouring to benefit the female population, both whilst resident with her brother the Judge at Gorruckpore, and afterwards in Calcutta, where she died. Miss Bird's attention was given more especially to the Mussulman women, being well acquainted with the Hindoostanee language, in which she wrote and translated several little books for the use of children. No schools for Mahomedan girls were formed by her in Calcutta, the difficulties in doing so then, were much greater than now exist, besides which, her time was very much occupied with daily visiting and instructing children in the free school, where her labors have been greatly missed, as well as in reading and talking to the poor Mussulman women, to some of whom she was made the happy instrument of imparting the knowledge of the Saviour.

Miss Bird was removed from her sphere of useful and devoted service, in the Lord's vineyard, very suddenly and unexpectedly, by cholera :—a few days before her death she gave testimony that though her trials and difficulties had been many and great, in the prosecution of her plans, yet that she never regretted the step she had taken, and would willingly endure all over again

for the same purpose and in the same cause. Miss Bird's labors were the foundation of a mission established in Calcutta by the Church Missionary Society for the Mahomedans. There are, however, no female schools directly devoted to the Mussulman population: an extensive and open field of usefulness.

CHAPTER XIV.

NATIVE CHURCH—CHARACTER OF CONVERTS—DIFFICULTY OF OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT—HINDRANCES TO SPIRITUALITY—DESIRE FOR MISSIONARIES—REQUISITE PREPARATION FOR THE WORK OF FEMALE EDUCATION—VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS—APPEAL TO ALL DENOMINATIONS OF CHRISTIANS FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

THE convert has already been slightly noticed both as liable to persecution on his first profession of the Christian faith, and as needing all the care and attention of the missionary, after being admitted a catechumen. In drawing this sketch to a close, it seems natural that the native church should occupy some more distinct attention. Its progress has been looked for with sanguine expectations, and from some good promise among the mission schools, hopes have been entertained that a native ministry would soon be formed; but we are here taught, that it is not for man to appoint the time, or to measure the workings of the Holy Spirit, and the Missionary's experience of delay will lead him more distinctly to consult the revealed will of the Lord in every branch of the work.

The numbers who form congregations vary from twenty to perhaps one hundred and fifty ; they generally live under the immediate eye as well as under the care of the Missionary, most frequently residing in mat-huts within the walls of the compound ; thus the missionary is not only engaged in preaching the Gospel in the streets and highways to the heathen, but in the pastoral care of those brought into the fold. It is often urged against efforts for conversion, and against converts themselves, especially in India, that Christianity is embraced from necessity, or the pressure of poverty. So far as real conversion is meant, the power which produces it, we know to be of God, whether in the heart of the poorest, or the richest ; of the most offending transgressor or the most amiable and consistent moralist ; and let it be remembered that, the man who has nothing to relinquish but the sins of his own heart, and his natural enmity against God, may be as sincere a disciple of the Lord Jesus, as one who gives up all that this world can bestow. There are doubtless many who are actuated in the first instance by wrong motives, and some from the hope of mere gain, but if it be so, we only find what is to be discovered in every body of professing Christians, hypocrites as well as unbelievers. The community of native Christians being small, and all they do

and say coming directly under observation, the evil with them is more apparent. It should also be considered, that however poor and destitute the convert in India may be, he becomes an out-cast from his fellow countrymen, renouncing every claim of assistance or kindness from his former associates, as well as all the prejudices and feelings that have been nurtured and strengthened from his birth, so that if he does gain subsistence by joining a Christian congregation, it is generally of the humblest kind, and he still has more to sacrifice and more to endure, than can be experienced in a Christian country. This adverse state of things is especially felt by those anxious to provide labor for the native Christians: but it is a trial of faith, which must be patiently borne, till the body is sufficiently large, to carry on work with efficient strength, without the co-operation of the heathen. When qualified as writers, or as candidates for employment under government, there is great caution necessary in bringing them forward; and those in authority, who are best disposed towards the converts, feel it obligatory upon them to stifle any preference, not simply lest the jealousy of the Hindoos should be roused, but also lest they should be holding out encouragement to vain profession. Merchants generally have their establishment under the direction of an in-

fluent native, and it is with the greatest reluctance that a Christian convert is admitted. In the same way it is almost impossible for private families to qualify them as servants, the rest of the household being heathen people, who either refuse to work with such as have lost caste, or they seek in every way to bring them into disgrace with their employers.

There is an institution in Calcutta for supplying Christian readers to private families, who are willing to assemble their domestics together once or twice in the week for the purpose of having the Scriptures read to them, and explained. Hitherto there have been very few instances of conversion amongst servants.

The low state of spirituality and even of moral conduct amongst those who are considered sincere converts, is another subject of reproach: it is admitted to be a just cause of the deepest sorrow, both for the missionary, and every friend of Christianity; but the evil and demoralizing effect of heathenism can never be understood by those who have not come into actual contact with it. When long habits of indolence of mind and body, with the unrestrained practice of every vicious propensity without censure, are to be contended with, what can be looked for, under the ordinary operation of spiritual growth, in men who profess to

renounce these hidden works of Satan, but weakness and inconsistency? Disappointment likewise frequently results from more simplicity of purpose and holiness of life being expected in a convert, than we habitually look for as the effect of pious care and influence in a christian land. But how rarely is real religion in the heart with a consistent life and conversation, to be found: and if the comparison could be made in the balances of truth, between many a poor despised and weak Hindoo convert, and professing Christians in Europe, it is not impossible, that the burden would fall the heaviest, where privileges and advantages have been the greatest.

Where difficulties and discouragements abound, they must be met in the spirit and power of faith. "Men of honest report full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom," are the only qualified messengers! The Spirit of counsel and understanding must be more earnestly and diligently entreated by all who desire the spread of the Gospel and the salvation of the perishing heathen, to call forth such laborers to assist those already in the field, to supply the places of the fallen, and to be the heralds of good news to lost sinners, in provinces where the sound of truth has not yet been heard. The blessing of the Lord will then be seen more distinctly to rest upon

the work, rendering it effectual for the accomplishment of His own purposes, and the increase of His own glory. No excitement of feeling, no desires founded upon the interest of an encouraging anecdote, however ardent or sincere, will prove a right preparation for such undertakings. Nothing but a holy determination to do and to suffer the Lord's will, in persevering, uncomplaining self-denial, will sustain any laborer in such a conflict, in abiding hope and patient submission. The work must be entered upon and continued in obedience to the express command of God, and then let labor apparently be altogether vain, let expectation be entirely disappointed, and the laborer himself be reputed as the Apostles were, a spectacle of folly to angels and to men, and the offscouring of all things, yet the foundation of his happiness and peace remains untouched and undisturbed; he can still look up with confiding, cheerful though chastened courage, and say, "My witness is in heaven, my record is on high."

For those who would engage in native female education, the same preparation for self-denial and suffering of mind, is necessary: nothing but faith that worketh by love, can or ought to be the leading motive, faith that will support the heart under every trial, and "love that makes hard things

easy, and bitter things sweet." There is much to bear in coming into collision with the habits as well as feelings of Indian natives, and extreme heat makes the task of instruction both to the teacher and learner, difficult and wearisome, whilst the propensities of the poorer classes shock the more refined sense of modesty and cleanliness of a European: but the greatest trial arises from children being removed from the schools, just when they are capable of profiting most from religious instruction, and from the teacher's inability to pursue the interest excited, by a growing desire in the child's mind to forsake heathenism, and to embrace Christianity.

The resident ladies of India are too much occupied with their families and domestic duties, even where the inclination to give help exists, to pay that attention to the languages which is necessary for intercourse with native females, who, of whatever class in society, must first be taught in Bengali or Hindoostanee, as they have not with the generality of the boys, been made acquainted with English. This is one great reason why so little assistance in teaching, &c. can be looked for at present from any who are not distinctly set apart for the work. Another hindrance results from the climate. The European families residing at a great distance from the native population, the necessary

exposure is difficult, and sometimes dangerous: That an increasing interest may be manifested by Christian ladies in India, placed as they are in the responsible character of 'lights' in the midst of such awful darkness, and that many may yet be induced to take a more active and decided part in a work of such importance, is our ardent hope.

No funds have hitherto been in reserve for this branch of labor, the chief source of support for the Central School, and other objects of the Ladies' Society, as well as for Mrs. Wilson's Orphan Refuge, has been the sale of useful and fancy articles sent out from England. Voluntary contributions in India have often been liberal, but they are uncertain, from the continued change of European residents; and for those things so kindly sent out, it can easily be understood that there is a limited demand; it is extremely desirable, therefore, if the ladies' work could be disposed of in England, and the money sent to India, to be divided according to the donor's wishes, in support of the two objects: with so many calls on the benevolent in England, this may however often be impracticable. Until native cooperation is obtained, the amount of funds necessary for carrying on these objects must be considerable.

The question of *laborers* in this cause is both the most difficult and the most important conside-

ration; there is a field for work open, for as many as can be found fitted to engage in it. It is suggested that Christian congregations in a town may unite to forward the views of any lady qualified for the work by undertaking to defray her necessary expences to India, and to aid in her support there. At the same time, ladies who are freed from direct obligations to remain in their own country, are earnestly requested to make it a matter of prayerful consideration, whether they may not be called of the Lord to glorify his name, by thus devoting themselves and their substance to his work in foreign lands. Time passes rapidly away, and the day approaches when he that will come, shall come quickly, and the myriads that are perishing for lack of knowledge, shall be called to their final account.

Both the Central School and the Refuge are conducted on those pure gospel principles which distinguish the Church of England, and it is to the missionaries of the church, that converts are given over for baptism. Mrs. Wilson most earnestly desires that a clergyman and his wife of tried experience, may be found willing to occupy the interesting station which Agraparah presents.

Both institutions are at all times open to the public inspection in India, and all denominations of Christians have been willing to grant their aid.

We trust that in this little work, the comprehensive character of these efforts on behalf of the females is so clearly brought to view, that the charity of our fellow-christians will abound, making this branch of labor in the vineyard, an example of love and unity for the Lord's sake. However small the contribution may be, the promised reward will be realised in faith, whilst those who are actually engaged in the labor, will go on their way rejoicing.

The cause of the poor idolatrous females in bondage, of the children in the schools, of the orphans under Christian care, and of the children of converts, are all one, and they are earnestly commended to the faithful prayers of every Christian,—that grace, mercy, and peace may be their blessed portion, as well as the inheritance of those who by God's holy providence are placed under more favourable circumstances for knowing and doing his will.

THE END.

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